9.3.

Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

284 The Hunting-Field. By **Harry Hieover** [Charles Brindley], Author of "The Stud," "Practical Horsemanship," etc. Second Edition. London. 1859.

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THE

HUNTING-FIELD.

LONDON
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From a Painting by the Author

The Right sort.

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HUNTING-FIELD.

BY

[illegible] "PRACTICAL HORSEMANSHIP" ETC. ETC.

Second Edition.

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PREFACE.

In a former work, namely, "Practical Horsemanship," I gave such hints on ordinary riding as I trusted would be useful to the reader, based as they were on principles that I found, when put in practice, had usually answered their intended purpose.

But that work was confined exclusively to road riding; and my motive in limiting it to that branch of equestrianism arose from deference to what I conceived might be the wishes and interest of the reader. If he only wants to practise road riding, he has there the best advice I can give; and if he wishes to become acquainted with hunting riding, he will find the subject discussed in the present volume — "The Hunting-Field."

That there are thousands of hunting riders to whom it would be the height of arrogance in me to offer any advice, I am quite aware; and if such should think proper to peruse this book, that they will only do so from curiosity, or to pass away an

idle hour, I am aware also. But fortunately for the Author, there are tens of thousands who hunt; and numbers of these are widely different from the real hunting man. The two are about on a par with the man who sails on the sea and the sailor.

If all men who hunt were really hunting men, not a line of advice on the subject of riding to hounds should ever have been penned by me. I write for some who hunt, and any who intend to hunt; and so far much practice and experience may, I trust, give me some pretence to offer advice.

The book in no way pretends to make any one acquainted with the mode of hunting hounds, or of becoming conversant with the intricacies of the chace; it does not even pretend to make a man a sportsman. Neither theory nor precept could do this, however good might be the former, or however ably advanced might be the latter. Practice and observation must be called in to achieve this. But as to becoming a sportsman, a man must be able to ride with hounds; if a book affords such instructions to the tyro as will enable him to do this with safety to himself and horse, it has some claim to utility; and that utility will be further increased if, in teaching him how to promote his own sport, it also tells him how and where to

avoid marring that of others; for, though "I hope I don't intrude" could always produce a laugh for Liston, if it was quoted on maiming a favourite hound, or heading a fox just breaking cover, the offender would be told he did intrude most abominably; and "Tally ho, back!" from the huntsman would probably be followed by anathemas both loud and deep.

Those who have seen what horses have done and will do with such weights as Messrs. Gurney, Edge, or Colonel Wyndham, and have also seen the best dead beat under the lightest man, must be quite aware of the wonderful difference between riding with judgment and the reverse. It is, in fact, almost in effect as great as that between a good and bad horse. Any ordinary difference of weight is slight when put in comparison with that between judicious and injudicious riding; and in knowing what does or does not distress horses, this difference mainly depends.

Figuratively speaking, any man with common judgment and moderate nerve can keep a fair place with hounds, if he rides the same horses, if those are good and handy, and the country an average one as to its general character and fences; but to make the most of a moderate horse, manage a queer-tempered one, or keep an uncertain fencer straight and on his legs, requires a knowledge of

horses, fencing, ground, and hunting, not to be acquired in a season or two.

I may be unequal to impart such information as is requisite to make my reader what he may wish to become in such matters; but he may at least derive this advantage from a perusal of this volume — it will probably enable him to understand and appreciate superior instructions from any better informed than myself, in the matters on which I have written.

If, however, such joint efforts fail in teaching him to acquire the indispensable requisites for a hunting rider, let him again read this preface, where I give him such advice as, under such circumstances, I know to be good; namely, let him seek other pursuits and give up hunting, for he will find no real enjoyment in it, if, instead of "going like a workman" among those who do, certain indications make him more than suspect he is "going like a muff."

In something like illustration of these two opposite characters, I have sketched two subjects for engravings, which I trust will explain their meaning sufficiently without my intruding long on the reader's time.

The "right sort," I mean to comprehend both biped and quadruped: the men are a good, fair specimen of hunting riders, the horses also a fair description of hunter; they are taking a rather

spreading, but perfectly fair and safe fence,—one that no man would hesitate at, if he only carried a little "jumping powder" about him as an occasional refresher to his nerves, and his horse has any whalebone qualification in his anatomy. Whether chance has occasioned them to take the fence at the same moment, or there is a little "setting" each other in the case, matters not; if they only give their nags a little "stay" on landing, and one little twist to set them going again, they will be all right. They all look like hardish bitten ones; but I should say the dark brown and his rider "for choice."

The other plate shows four animals of a different sort. It might be imagined that a gap made by all the rough work having been already done, might have been held as "practicable;" but the young gentleman with the stake through his coat-flap is of course of a different opinion. His black animal seems to coincide perfectly in such opinion, and fully carries into practice the judicious maxim of "look before you leap," if leaping he means at all. To such saltatic contemplation the friend is applying some persuasive argument of rather a cutting nature, but which the black appears to endure most philosophically; he has contrived to get his leg over one bridle rein,—a circumstance that in my ignorance I have always guarded against, if compelled to "turn over." Now I

recommend all my sporting friends to the opposite practice; for if they place the rein as the black has got it, they will find they will derive one of two great advantages by it. It will either throw the nag into the ditch on the other side, or if he escapes that catastrophe, it will give him on landing such a chuck back, that the rider in either case will have him caught as safe as a hare in a wire. Such practice might perhaps cause little delays; but if it does, it gives you the advantage of seeing what all the field are doing before you, —a treat that your first flight man cannot enjoy.

The owner of the bay has doubtless been told a throat-latch should never be put on tight. In this I quite agree, though from what occurs to his nag, it may appear that a throat-latch is intended for a purpose of which he seems to be unaware.

The black, I doubt not, is held by the impaled gentleman to be a very fine animal. I should, however, opine that he must be a *leetle slow*. The other is a common-looking animal, I grant; still there is a bare possibility he may be better than he looks; at all events I back him Moulsey Hurst to a hen's egg against the black. But take them all together, horse and foot, there can be little doubt of their being quite "the wrong sort."

H. H.

INTRODUCTION.

WHENEVER a book appears where it is left to surmise whether it is founded on fact, fiction, or consists partly of both, an irrepressible curiosity is generally felt by the Reader on this head.

Whether the occurrences or characters mentioned in it are imaginary, or taken from life, would neither make the book better or worse; but if a few lines can satisfy such curiosity, why should it not be gratified?

All the occurrences alluded to, both in "Practical Horsemanship" and in this book, are taken from what the Author has seen; they are facts, but altered in respect of time and place, so as to prevent personality. The Characters are from life, but so disguised as to prevent the individual who sat for the sketch taken being recognised, unless where the name is fairly stated. A character or two may be guessed at, without the Reader being very wrong in his divination; where I have left this possibility, it is where I am indifferent about the matter, either from not considering any great delicacy necessary, or from not having said any thing likely to wound the feelings.

There are men who have hunted westward of London who have seen more than one "bruising" M. F. H. There are men in London and its vicinity who have seen more than one Mr. Jessamy; though I am thankful to say that I never saw but one veritable Jessamy with hounds. I have put the General on a dun horse, merely, because I never saw him on one of that colour; but the General lived and rode. The Clergyman mentioned lived (and I hope lives), and well he did his duty in everything; and well he did his duty when, *sub rosâ*, he managed a pack of fox-hounds. Young Roberts lived, albeit that was nearer his Christian than surname.

Thus far I satisfy the curiosity of the Reader; my friend and guest also lived, and subsequently often showed the way in Leicestershire. Would he were now alive!

Having thus introduced my Characters to my Reader, I hope he will permit me to introduce the book.

If I should be asked why I have not written a better book, the answer is very easy — because I did not know how. If I am asked why I have written in a somewhat peculiar way — I will give my reasons for doing so.

Whatever theme an author selects for his pen, I conceive he should, as far as possible, make

his style correspond with his subject. If it be a light one, a regular didactic style might lead to the supposition that the author attaches too much importance to his own work; if in narrating a simple tale, an author adopts a florid style, he spoils his work; he makes that ridiculous which in simple language would, perhaps, have been touching and interesting.

Under such impressions I considered the subjects of this book could not be discussed in a too unaffected or familiar style; and hence I address what I say to a Friend instead of the Public.

I had, however, another motive. I considered that to bring forward cases that, with small unimportant alterations, actually occurred, would enable the Reader to form his judgment from them; my own might very probably err: but the cases as I have stated them are correct. If, therefore, the Reader should form erroneous opinions from them, I shall not be liable to the charge of having misled him.

The friend alluded to, and for whom I once penned many sheets similar in matter to the present, was for many years well-known both to the fashionable and sporting world. He is gone, but his memory will live long after the Author of these pages will have been forgotten.

H. H.

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THE HUNTING-FIELD.

CHAPTER I.

The Chase: its Pleasures. — The Fox-hunter and the Farmer. — A Case in Point. — Plain Facts. — Sportsmen Personified. — Masters of Fox-hounds. — Their Distinctive Features. — How to form a Sportsman. — Difference of Packs. — Illustrative Anecdotes.

The Field! Not, reader, the far-famed one of Waterloo, nor the more remote in history but equally memorable one of Bosworth. My humble pen shall not carry my ideas to either plain, though my horse has carried me over both. It was with the enthusiasm of a mere boy I was first carried across either, but with enthusiasm of a different sort, and, sooth to say, the one by far the most agreeable. For, hail, thou field of Bosworth! if Mars has claimed thee as the temporary arena of his belligerent sons, fair Diana has "smoothed the rugged front of war" by making thee a part and parcel of her sylvan territory. Unheroic may be the choice, but in honesty I must avow I hold it pleasanter to put

my courser at a gate than "to put my life upon a cast;" and if we may judge by the crooked-backed hero's speech before the memorable morning dawned, he would just as soon have seen and hunted one game fox there as the six Richmonds he talks about; and, if I mistake not, about half-past two on the eighteenth of June, in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, there were some on the other plain who would have felt quite as well pleased with the certainty of sleeping at Leicester or Melton as in not knowing whether they should sleep or die where they were.

Our Field is here of far different intent and purpose; and, though composed of souls that "dare do all that may become a man," our vulpine war brings no sigh of regret to any one, but adds health, vigour, high spirits, and good fellowship to all who partake in it, and is, moreover, one of the few pursuits and pleasures of this life that "leaves no sting behind."

Hail, then, thou mimic field of war! and thou, chaste goddess, hail! thou whose bright example has tempted so many of the high and noble bright-eyed fair ones of our land to add a brighter tint to beauty by the fresh morning's breeze. Interesting as woman ever is, and interesting as is the fair creature whose attenuated and fragile form tells the true tale of the sad havoc of a fashionable life, the interest she excites must ever

be attended by anxious hope and apprehensive forebodings. But, worse than this, let not the fair one fancy that the interest she creates carries with it also admiration. 'Tis true, they say, that "pity is akin to love." In one sense, perhaps, it is; but, in another, let her not fancy that pity is akin to captivation. No, as a blunt fox-hunter, let me tell her the homely truth: the man who affirms how far more lovely is the "drooping lily" than "the blushing rose," where he has neither design nor gallantry to induce him to mask his genuine thoughts, will tell the plain truth in merely speaking of her as a sickly girl.

If only one such fair being was roused from the hallucination of her ideas and infatuation of her pursuits, and was to let her willing steed carry her where the enlivening cry of hounds would give a fresh stimulus to thoughts and feelings *blasé* of the studied concord of instrumental music, and where faces beaming with animation would show the difference between real and assumed gaiety, there would she catch the pleasing infection, and bracing air and healthful exercise would soon restore the buoyancy of spirits and elasticity of step, the natural attributes of youth and health. One, aye only one, such achievement among the many would be enough to immortalise the hunting-field for ever.

On however precarious a footing an author

may stand, and most precarious that footing is if he selects hunting as the subject of his pen, fortunately for that subject, it has a far firmer hold of public estimation than he who chronicles its joys and incidents; and whatever is written on it is sure to challenge the attention of thousands, and, if at all ably handled, will be favoured by the commendation of some. To those I can only say,

> "Blame where you must, be lenient where you can,
> And be the Critic the good-natured man."

Among the few who decry hunting and its votaries, we rarely, if ever, find the noble, the high-minded, or the well-educated. The town-bred and half-bred miss, living with her parents in a snuggery, at thirty-five pounds a year rent, in Lambeth, Holloway, or Paddington, where lawyers' clerks, counter gentlemen from linen-drapers, lacemen, and others are regaled with tea and muffins, brought in by a slip of thirteen, denominated, *par excellence*, our servant, may hold a lady knowing anything of a horse as contra-feminine, forgetting that ignorance in this way arises from her parents and parents' ancestors never having been in a position in life to have any. The young lady forgets, or rather overlooks, that, from similar causes, she is a no better judge of pictures, bronzes, marqueterie, or exotics

than she is of horses, whereas the high-born woman is equally a judge of all from possessing, and having possessed, them.

Probably, the same young lady's papa is so far honoured as occasionally to entertain the master of a shop, who begs to know "if there is any other article he can have the pleasure of showing his customer this morning," and bores one by producing some "entirely new" sort of bobbinet or other bobbery that is not wanted. In such a case, while her heart beats high, and new hopes and wishes find birth in her bosom, she rails against field-sports and fox-hunters; first, from knowing nothing of either, and, secondly, from well-knowing the august object of her proud and towering aspirations never took a leap in his life, unless over his own counter. How much more flattering a position she considers the fascinating Mr. Gauzecollar holds while a piece of white ribbon from his own shop at his breast proclaims him steward for the night at the "Casino de Venise," or some such place, than the nobleman at a fixture, with his fox-hounds. While she sees Mr. Gauzecollar figuring away, overdoing and ill-doing all the steps taught him by Mr. Hopper in Silver Street, Golden Square, and, by his officious underbred attempts at gallantry, making havoc in the hearts of scores of little straw-chippers and sundry ladies of rather

equivocal character, she infers the noble sportsman is snoring in his chair; little suspecting that he whose straight going with his hounds at midday challenged the admiration of the field, is at midnight by the fascination of his manners challenging the smiles of the high and fairest daughters of aristocracy. The fair aspirant for Mr. Gauzecollar's notice "never could abide a dog" till he presented her with some snub-nosed cur that she leads about as a King Charles. She screams if a horse comes near her; and when the daring Gauzecollar once hired one, and rode three miles out of his way to show himself thus mounted, the pretty blushes that accompanied her overcoming her timidity to reach the digit of the preux cavalier, told the tale of what love will dare for those beloved. "How beautiful he looks a 'orseback!" sighed the fair one as the receding form of the gallant youth diminished in the distance, wending its way back to Cheapside.

But among those many degrees above the grades of the inhabitant of the suburban snuggery and the renowned Gauzecollar, we sometimes hear "I am not very fond of seeing ladies on horseback," from a London miss who is somewhat in the state of the fox and grapes of old; and "I should not like to see a wife of mine ride" is a sentiment sometimes mooted by gentlemen whose prospects need give them little alarm

as to their veto being called in question as to their *ladies'* equestrian performances. Happy souls! whose wishes and means jog on so harmoniously together. Would to Heaven I could bring myself to dislike four good steppers in hand and half-a-dozen good hunters in the stable; but Philosophy uses me most scurvily in this particular, and will not bring a particle of its influence in my favour. Well, if latterly my debts to Providence and Philosophy have not been heavy, I am under the less obligation to them. There is some comfort in that, and to feel that comfort is about the extent of my obligation. And as to friends, light as the gossamer floats my conscience respecting most of them.

But, though hunting and sporting pursuits, like everything else in this warring world, have some enemies, there are two great causes why those enemies are not general. Such pursuits have, from some incentive or other, been, from time out of mind, the pursuits of numbers of all nations of the globe; hence arrogant must be those who would attempt to deny as wrong, ridiculous, or blamable, that which has ever had as its supporters many of the best, the wisest, and highest born of all countries. And again, as the great and fashionable uphold, patronise, and partake in such pursuits, those who are high enough to aim at being thought above the herd dare not con-

demn that which those they emulate choose to patronise.

Hunting possesses one advantage and recommendation which distinguishes it from all other amusements, — it injures no one, and benefits thousands. Cavillers may say, Does it not injure the farmer whose fences are broken, and land ridden over? I answer, unquestionably, No: it would injure him if he had no equivalent given him; but he has. If he is put to expense or loss by a hunting-field, unless he is known to be a surly brute, that loss is always made up to him; and, indeed, in a general way, he gets more than compensated. "Ware Wheat," "Ware Turnips," or "Ware Clover," is constantly heard if any one is seen riding more than could be avoided over either. Doubtless, enemies to field sports, or those who know nothing of agricultural pursuits or produce beyond what an interested farmer may tell, will sympathise with him, if he says he had a fine field of wheat ridden over and spoiled: in such a case, if he got no remuneration, and if the wheat was spoiled, their sympathy would be well placed; but that such must be the case because it is ridden over, is not a more certain sequitur than the being kicked off a horse is the consequence of getting on one. If a root of wheat is trodden further into the ground than it originally was, the hoof of the horse commits a very rude

assault, but by no means certain murder. On some land the root would derive benefit from the pressure; and if, instead of this, it is torn up, it brings with it sufficient encompassing earth to carry on its growth in a new situation, and wheat, like geraniums, will stand a good deal of cutting and transplanting, and then spring up, like the heads of the Hydra, vigorous as ever.

I can fancy I hear Farmer Winnowwheat exclaim on hearing what I have stated, "What can a *chap* that writes books know about wheat?" My reply to such an observation from the worthy farmer would be,—I do not pretend to a great amount of knowledge, but why I may know something of wheat being ridden over is this: I have had five hundred acres of land on my hands, and those situated within a quarter of a mile of a fox-hound kennel; so my fields came in for a full share, three or four fixtures being in my immediate vicinity. I therefore may know something about this subject; in fact, men of real literary talent would perhaps, despite the farmer, hold that I know more of riding across wheat, than of writing across a sheet of foolscap. Whatever may be the case, I can only say I never had a field of wheat spoiled, or, as I could detect, materially injured, by being ridden over.

But I can bring a case in point. I had a small nook on my farm of about an acre; this was wheat,

and a regular "cul-de-sac." Out of a large field, one day, some scores of horsemen got into this trap; but as the fence out was not practicable, they had to return to the gate: thus the field came in for no ordinary treading, and certainly presented a rather disarranged appearance. I sent a roller into it next day, and never saw or had a finer crop off the same quantity of land. I must, however, allow, that on a more stiff clayey and wet soil damage would have been done; but if it had, a proper application to the master of the hounds would have set all right, had I been disposed to make one.

Now turnips really do suffer when ridden over, for when a shoe bruises one, the chances are that it decays and rots away. But turnips are seldom ridden over if it can be avoided, for the damage they incur is known to all regular frequenters of a hunt; and one who is not so is soon reminded of, or taught this fact, if he is seen transgressing. And again, a field of full-grown turnips is not a kind of galloping ground any man would select if he could avoid it.

Clover lays suffer much if ridden over; but if crossed in the direction of the lands the furrow is always selected, and if transversely, there is mostly a headland that leads to a gate: this is also generally the soundest part, and is, in most cases, the part ridden over. In short, the damage

a Field does is always much exaggerated when complained of at all.

A farmer may, on an average, get one gate broken in a season; if he does, the carpenter or blacksmith makes it as good as ever for a couple of shillings, and a day's work at eighteen pence to a hedger, repairs many fences, of which the materials probably cost nothing.

If the farmer is rich, and a sportsman, these trifles neither hurt his pocket nor mind; if poor, he is sure to be remunerated.

We will now look to the creditor side of the account. In the extent of country over which a pack of fox-hounds has its fixtures, we may fairly infer that a couple of hundred men keep hunters. Not to exceed the mark, we will average these at three horses each: some keeping six or more, others one. This gives us 600 horses, consuming, at the least, 1,200 bushels of corn weekly, something about 9,000 quarters of corn yearly, and say, a thousand tons of hay, — a pretty good lift to the produce of the neighbourhood, — a kind of free trade among neighbours that carries no dissension with its effects. If we, therefore, take into consideration the numbers of packs of fox-hounds kept in Great Britain, it will be seen that the vent through them of farmers' produce is enormous, and the number of persons employed equally great in its way.

It is all very well in a pastoral poem to use a kind of clap-trap for the applause of a certain grade, to carp at the noble as requiring

> "Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
> Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds."

Our poet quite overlooked the number of persons employed, and the money circulated by the pursuits requiring the space he grudges the noble possessor.

What he says of their usurping the space that "many poor supplied," is sheer nonsense; such Utopian ideas alone would have been sufficient to prove him what he was, a very pretty poet and a very weak man.

> "A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
> When every rood of ground maintain'd its man."

A very catching couplet to those who can believe such a state of things practicable or possible. Poets certainly have a licence, and the poet in question has used it most freely, for when England's griefs began is rather an indefinite period to hit upon, and when every rood of ground maintained its man is a state of things that never did exist, will exist, or could exist.

As one of these domains, where there is space for all those appurtenances to a nobleman that are so reproachfully alluded to by the poet, and

where a pack of fox-hounds has been long kept on a princely scale by the best of sportsmen, we will suppose the estates of the Duke of Cleveland to be subdivided till every rood of ground, for the time being, had its man. Could any one be absurd enough to suppose it would continue thus? It would not over one harvest; some, from idleness, bad management, or bad habits, would find they could not hold their own; a more prudent or better managing neighbour takes it, and adds it to his own, and probably the late owner of the added rood assists the new possessor in its culture: here in the first, not only generation, but season, one becomes doubly possessed, and the other a labourer; as possessions and wealth accumulate, so do the means of acquiring increased wealth. The careful man adds rood by rood to his property, till he possesses ten roods; nine of his neighbours become labourers; and of those who still retain their rood, he, as relates to them, becomes a large landed proprietor, they only a step above the labourer: he is to them what the wealthy farmer, holding a thousand acres, and riding hunting, is to the man tilling a hundred and holding his own plough: and thus, as now, in the course of time would Raby Castle again own one master.

If every individual living had the same talent, the same industry, habits, and disposition, if we gave each similar possessions and means, each

might, for a considerable time, retain an equal position in society; but even under such circumstances, ill luck-or ill-health would shortly dispossess one, while it enriched another: and it is quite proper it should be so; for, supposing Great Britain could give an acre of land to each inhabitant, instead of a rich and enlightened nation, we should be a set of Boors, without sense enough to carry on the common cause of all. It is not as Goldsmith describes, even among savage tribes, for with them the best hunter gets the most skins, and the best warrior the most sway.

The poor, feeling the shoe that pinches them, are induced to envy and decry the rich and great; they do this from looking at the picture in a wrong light. They can scarcely be expected to believe the fact, that virtually it is by the rich and great that the poorer live; in fact, without the great the little could not live, for do away with the great, the poor would become slaves here, or pretty much the same thing, to other nations: if, therefore, every noble and man of wealth could be induced to do what equalisers would wish, namely, distribute his patrimony till he gave a thousand families a hundred a year, and left himself with the same income, so far from benefiting mankind, he would be taking a most effectual step towards striking at the root of common welfare.

Avaunt! then, ye who only rail at the great and

noble because their position is one for which you were not designed and are not fitted. Avaunt! ye soulless beings, who decry the glories of the Chase because you have not hearts or means to enjoy it. While Old England stands pre-eminent among nations, so will its aristocracy stand among men; and while this lasts, so will the glorious Chase stand pre-eminent among our national sports and pastimes.

I am quite willing to admit that the man whose avocation carries him no further than from Lothbury or Fenchurch to Clapham Common, and whose appurtenances of his pursuits are comprised in pen, ink, paper, wax, wafer, seal and sand, may have in him the germ of a hero's courage and enthusiasm; but he who has stood conspicuous in bold relievo amongst his comrades in the burst of blaze in a dozen sieges, leaves no doubt of the materials he is made of; and the man who, cap in hand, rattles along his pack of fox-hounds at a racing pace, shows at once the soul that is in him; and what he does will always be done "en prince," whether it be boarding a tyrant potentate and defying his threatened vengeance, or soothing the wretched applicant and relieving his gaunt necessities.

A sportsman is, perhaps, among the generality of men, a somewhat indefinite term. Each man who follows any sort of sport calls himself a

sportsman: in his way, he certainly is so. The walking gentleman on the stage is an actor, but not quite John Kemble or Talma.

Angling is a sport; and the illiberal cynic who described it as a rod with a worm at one extremity and a fool at the other, exemplified his own definition; for the best, the wisest, and most gifted have been anglers. There is not, in a general way, certainly, much excitement in the pursuit, and I should be apt to consider the man who preferred it to robuster sports to be one with little enthusiasm in his composition, probably a very amiable and estimable man; but my fox-hunting predilections would never allow me to consider such a man a sportsman, unless he was one who angled when, from some cause or other, he could not hunt.

Shooting is unquestionably sporting; and if a man shot because or when he could not hunt, I should *par excellence* call him a sportsman; but if by choice he went pottering about with a brace of pointers when he could enjoy the sight of five-and-twenty couples of fox-hounds finding, and in chase, I must say I should hold him somewhat slow as a sportsman; in fact, courtesy alone would induce me to call him one. "The squire" shot, it is true, and so do hundreds of our first-flight men as fox-hunters; and whether it was a pigeon or a partridge, Osbaldiston shot enthusiastically;

but if he practised till, when he cried "pull" to the trapman, every bystander would say, "dead for a ducat;" or till the flashing zig-zag flight of the snipe never caused him a moment's hurry, or the "whur" of the pheasant never surprised him, let it be remembered that he also surprised the welkin with his "whoo-whoop" when the worried fox was held by the whipper-in over the impatient pack. That "whoo-whoop" was alone worth a day's journey to hear, and to see him also at the find and in the chase was worth a pilgrimage to Mecca. Such men should never die; but as they do, they have at least the consolation of knowing their memory lives for ever in the recollections of sportsmen, while their regrets are as undying as those recollections. The mere shooter will of course be regretted by his friends as a man, if he deserved such regrets; but when he dies, it is merely, as regards the sporting world, one good shot the less; and we may say, and we may think, as was said of the fallen knight in Chevy Chase, there are "within the realm five hundred good as he." Shooting is comparatively a solitary and selfish amusement, and also comparatively does no good to any one; so the loss of a shooter concerns him only as an individual; and his loss will be regretted or not in accordance with the estimation his general character placed him in

among his friends and acquaintance. But, independent of respective general worth as individuals of high position, the loss of such men as the Dukes of Beaufort or Cleveland creates a hiatus in the sporting world, a chasm in the kingdom, not readily to be filled up. The loss of their retinue and princely expenditure would be felt by hundreds, and, to quote the words (but reverse their meaning) of the poet I have before cited, would stop the means "that many poor supplied;" while their high bearing but courtesy in the field would ever live in the memory of all who have witnessed it. Enthusiastic as I am in my love of fox-hunting, candour obliges me to confess, I have among men as masters of fox-hounds, but of less high standing in society, seen acts and heard expressions used in the field, the coarseness of which all but induced a wish that the pack might cease to exist in order to get rid of their master.

There are three distinct characters as masters of fox-hounds, and of course an intermediate man among the three. There is the judicious but somewhat timid rider; the bold, dashing, scientific, and straight-going rider; and also the bruising rider; each quite fitted for a master of hounds. I need scarcely say that among the three, "in medio tutissimus ibis," that is, of the three, the middle one quoted approaches most the beau-ideal

of a master of fox-hounds, that is, supposing each to be in prime of life, health, and vigour.

But as it is neither necessary, desirable, nor advisable for a general commanding troops in a battle to meet his man sword-arm to sword-arm, so it is in no way necessary for a master of hounds to be a bold rider, unless he hunts them himself, in which case, giving him credit for good sense, of course he would be; where he is not so, although he may be quite aware that in a clipping run over a stiff country the chances are against him, still, so far from wishing to prevent the sport of others, if he is thrown out, he hears the whole account from his huntsman, and feels a good-natured pride and pleasure in learning his pack behaved well, and his friends were gratified. We are not, however, to suppose, because the master of a pack may not be a very bold rider, that such a case as I have described is one of very frequent occurrence. Masters of hounds are mostly thorough sportsmen, and where forward riding does not carry them through, their perfect knowledge of their country, their hounds, and the habits of their game, together with their general knowledge of hunting, does; and though the master may not have been seen for ten consecutive minutes going in the front rank, it will probably be found that he has been all along during the run near enough to have seen what

was going on, and probably could give by far a better account of the chase than any other person in the field. As a nobleman or man of fortune, he rides to please himself, leaving younger, vainer, or less sensible men to ride to please others. Something of the same sort will be seen in his dress, and even in the appointments of his own or his men's horses. The Tyro fears to have anything about himself or his people that is not sanctioned by general custom and use. The man of high standing and known judgment orders all about him in such manner or form as his good sense tells him is most convenient or effective. His dress is sure to be that of a sportsman and a gentleman; but he ties himself to no particular or general class of either as objects of imitation. If he thinks a saddle, for instance, of a make somewhat deviating from those in general use, to be more safe or easy for himself, his men, or horses, he uses such; and though he may not quote the doggrel rhyme,

> "Sir, I'm a gentleman, do ye think it fit,
> I should to vulgar rule submit?"

he feels he is a man of consequence, and one of sense, and as such does that which is sensible, without studying the opinion of the mere multitude.

Another sort of master of hounds is the dashing

straight rider, probably, a younger man. He scorns to "crane" at anything, and delights in the uncertainty between getting a cold bath and skimming over eighteen feet of water. He must have a flying country, hounds fast as meteors, and huntsmen and whips fast as his hounds. He, as a sportsman, wishes to see his hounds work handsomely, but ever wishes their work to be racing with "heads up and sterns down;" with only time to occasionally throw a tongue. He loves this not from any little or ill-natured feeling towards those not equally mounted or equally gifted, but in a manly way to throw down the gauntlet to those who are. He hunts for fame, rides for fame; so let it be. Fame is his vitality; probably his enthusiastic pursuit of it will be sobered by time; but if it be, the man who has once sought it in all pursuits "that may become a man," will very rarely indeed be found to do aught that would not. Such are the men who ought to enjoy, for they have the zest to enjoy, "the good the gods provide them." Long may they enjoy it!

Such a master of hounds will be certain to have everything in accordance with prevailing taste. His dress of the true Melton cut; his coat, by the most approved artist, is faultless; his hair and whiskers just as arranged by his French or Swiss valet; his boots and breeches patterns in their

way; his hunter, perfect in shape, make, and condition, is fit to run on a flat for a man's life: and while the first noble master I have specified arrives at the fixture in his post-carriage, stanhope, or on a safe good hack, our younger one comes careering across the country on a three hundred guinea hunter to whom he gives this breathing as a preparation for his next hunting day; or if the distance is too far for this, we see him in his mail shooting carriage, or his four-in-hand, with horses, in the purchase of any of which, the change out of a hundred and fifty would not pay two hours of the daily expenditure of his establishment.

In the bearing of the two different masters towards the field, a considerable difference may be remarked by any observer. The more experienced master and older inhabitant of the country, notices only such men as rank high in point of conduct and character; and if any steeple-chase rider, whose puppyism and impertience were only equalled by his ignorance and ill-temper, should happen to be out, he would be no more noticed by the master as a desirable addition to the field than would any stray hound who might choose to join the pack, so long as he was unobserved by the whip. Our younger M. F. H., acting more in accordance with the times, would probably hold such a man riding steeple-chases as a pass-

port to the notice of a nobleman, and would very probably accost him as Jem or John, the doing of which would arise from want of reflection, and consequent want of suitable conception and estimation of men and things. We will of course give the young noble credit for a courteous and perfectly gentlemanly demeanour in the field; for unless quite "apostate to his faith," his education and habits would ensure his being so; but it is quite possible that the same little mistaken ideas of propriety might induce a certain manner and certain expressions very distantly (let us hope) approaching to what might be held as bearing some affinity to "Slang," the very antithesis of such noblemen as I have mentioned by name as owning fox-hounds.

The appearance and manners of the servants of the more fashionable and younger M. F. H. will most likely differ from those of the other noble in minor points: they will of course know their business perfectly, though it is possible that in their endeavours to show a clipping run and fast thing, they may occasionally lose a fox; their appearance probably will have a spice of something of London, Newmarket, and steeplechasing in it, at all events, different from that of the men of the other pack, who, if seen at Tattersall's, would be at once set down as a huntsman and his whips, even if their persons

were unknown. Of course the manners of the men of both packs would be civil to gentlemen; but those of the men of the younger M. F. H. would want that perfectly respectful bearing always found in servants of really well-organised families.

Where a huntsman and his whips are aware that the master of the pack knows as much, or perhaps more of hunting than they do, it produces a deferential attention to his orders that a less experienced sportsman could not command. They are taught that they are the master's *servants;* the others hold themselves as *artists,* and consider the hunting the hounds as resting with themselves, and this produces a certain self-estimation, which is shown in their manner as well as harboured in their minds.

If I wished to make a man a thorough coachman, I should not be content with his being able to drive four thoroughly broke horses who would go of themselves, but after he had driven such I would give him a dose of four heavy-mouthed lazy ones, as also a team or two of some blind and some groggy queer-disposed "Bokickers," all and each with a different temper, and probably vice. When he can get the first along in fair time, and keep the others on their legs and in their places, I should call him a coachman: he will then appreciate the pleasure of driving his own team, and know what to do in emergency.

So to make a man a sportsman: if his resplendent star boded his finding himself in that "second heaven" namely, in the field, surrounded by his own pack of fox hounds, I would not let him perform his novitiate in a fine scenting, flying grass-country, where he would think more of his riding than his hounds. No; send him into a good rough one, well interspersed with woodland, where foxes require a good deal of badgering and driving to make, or rather force them to break: this will teach him patience, give him a knowledge of his hounds, and an ear to tell him what they are at when his eye cannot inform him. He will here learn what *hunting* is, that is, hunting in difficulties, and not merely to be only able to do what any man who is not afraid can do, namely, follow a flying pack that are always in his sight with very frequently their fox in sight also. It matters not to any one whether a man who hunts with others' hounds be a sportsman or not, provided he be sufficiently so as in a general way to hold his tongue and not interfere with the hounds, or get in their way; but a M. F. H. being a thorough sportsman just makes the difference of hounds affording good sport to a whole country or the reverse.

When a man has served a proper apprenticeship to hunting in different countries, so as to be able, if he wished, to hunt a pack of fox-hounds in

any, may he have as good a one as heart can wish, as fine a country as England can produce, plenty of foxes, plenty of means, and plenty of health to enjoy all, and as Pat says, "May he live for ever, and after too!"

Leaving aside the difference that would in all probability be found in two packs under the control of two such masters, that difference arising from the different taste, habits, and experience of each respectively, there will be perceived a wider difference still between the two in hunting a different description of country; and this difference would not only be unavoidable, but quite proper in character.

The style, strength, and breed of horses and hounds must differ in a light flying country, and a deep-holding and rough one; the men's dress even must be stronger in the latter, or they would have their boots torn off their legs, and their clothes from their backs: in fact, in such a country I once saw a whip emerge from a thick cover minus a saddle-flap. In very light breast-high countries, a huntsman and his whips should be light, and must, to live with their hounds, possess something of the attributes of the jockey and steeple-chase rider as to knowledge of pace and making the most of their horses; in more difficult countries the greater qualification is making the most of their *hounds*, and here more ex-

perienced men are desirable. A very slight touch of the dandy may not militate against a huntsman's qualifications, where he rides thoroughbreds and hunts hounds as delicate in their coats and fine as racing greyhounds; but where men and hounds have to actually force themselves through strong thorny covers, men, horses, and hounds must be used that will stand the encounter of such rough usage as all must meet with; and, advocate as I am for blood in all things, I know quite well that here a tolerably tough hide is really a desideratum in a huntsman as well as in horses and hounds. Under most circumstances we can pop a thin-skinned nag through a Bullfinch; the pace and his game induce him to make the momentary bolt through; but many of them would no more thrust themselves patiently through a strong cover than they would through a fire. Such countries were never to my taste, chiefly because the description of horse calculated for them was not to my taste either; and further than this, I would rather get a purler over a fair fence than be flayed alive *gradatim* by ragged ones, — a thing I hold next in abhorrence to the being kicked to death by black beetles.

There is, however another difference to be found in packs, and this originating from the difference of two masters. But here, unlike the two cases before alluded to, the difference arises

from the different positions in life, and consequently, different animus that pervades the two individuals. To make this clear, I will select two packs illustrative of this difference; and as most of those who hunted with the two packs in question (unless they were at the time, like myself, in boyhood) have ceased to breathe, I can offend no one by my remarks.

I will specify the two packs of fox-hounds that years back hunted Hertfordshire; the one the Essex, the other the Buckinghamshire side of the county; the latter were nominally the Marquis of Salisbury's. I say nominally, for though they were his property, they were under the control of the Marchioness; for when I knew them their lord was too infirm to hunt. The Marchioness was the perfection of a hunting horsewoman; rode as straight and boldly as I hold any gentlewoman should ride, while a servant, whose respectful demeanour showed him the servant of a nobleman, attended or piloted her, as the case might be. Many women I have known since, and know now, could beat her across a country, perfect horsewoman as she was: but they wanted and want that tact and manner that, in all cases, the other showed. In her, while we admired the horsewoman, nothing was done that could for a moment compromise the Marchioness, the wife of the noble owner of the pack. The number of the field

was usually comparatively small, say, forty or fifty; but they were gentlemen, — gentlemen of the county, and many of them frequent visitors at Hatfield House; few but those who occasionally at least enjoyed this privilege, hunted with these hounds; in fact, I recollect but two who regularly did so, the one a then eminent chemist on Ludgate Hill, the other the Mr. Dickenson of Gowland lotion celebrity; a capital sportsman, and respected, I believe, by all who knew him. A few farmers were occasionally out, and when they were, the condescension with which they were acknowledged by the Marchioness, showed they were men to be respected; and if a horse-dealer or two sometimes showed a clever hunter there, their dress and manner showed they were not ashamed of their trade, so no one was ashamed of them; the huntsman and his whips were of that order of men who, by their respectful manners to the gentlemen of the hunt, proved they were worthy of respect in return. Such was the Hatfield hunt: their country could not be called altogether a good one, that is, not one usually affording clipping runs, still it was one that called forth all the beauties of hunting, in the sagacity and steadiness of hounds, and knowledge of his business in the huntsman. It was not a first-flight rider's country, but in all its attributes perfectly a gentleman's, and one where

a real lover of hunting would be highly pleased and gratified.

The pack on the Essex side had for their M. F. H. a worthy citizen, a good sportsman, and doubtless a worthy man. They had certainly a better country than had their more aristocratic rivals, and I believe the whole establishment was well and liberally managed; but a glance at the collective meet at one of their fixtures showed at once a difference of men and manners: their fields were usually far more numerous than those of the Hatfield pack. Of course among them were some private gentlemen; but, unless it might be a military man quartered within reach, it was only some fortuitous chance that brought a man of fashion there.

I in no shape mean to infer that vulgarity was a prominent feature in the appearance or demeanour of the field, but there certainly was a want of that tone, and *ton*, that so immediately characterised the gentlemen of the other hunt. The uniform of the Hatfield was light blue, which produced a kind of exclusiveness not reached by a mere scarlet coat. I have seen many a horse-dealer in the latter, and as it is merely a hunting dress, he may wear it without incurring the charge of presumption; and so may any other tradesman. Perhaps it might evince better taste if they did not; but no man presumed to sport the Hatfield

colour unless requested to do so by the noble master, or the Marchioness. I could wish every hunt had a direct distinguishing livery or uniform for it: it possesses several advantages. It creates a respect for the wearer; it shows him to be a man known and estimated by the hunt, and, like the uniform of the military man, is a check on many acts that might be done when in mufty. Any stranger who is out, seeing a man in the coat of the hunt start well and go well, takes him for his pilot; and by so doing steers clear of mischief which he otherwise, from ignorance of localities, might be led into. Should one of the hunt get thrown a little astray, if he sees a man in the uniform going a field or so off, he recognises him as "one of us," and feels he is all right: if, on the contrary, he merely rides after a plain red coat, he may be following a stay-maker from Cheapside, who knows as much of the country as the other does of stays.

Mais à-propos (not) *de bottes*, but coats, I will here mention an anecdote that affords me much pleasure in narrating, as it shows an instance of feeling and refinement in a servant that should make us keep in mind that there sometimes is among this class of persons, when treated with proper consideration, the germ of sentiment worthy a higher order:—

The uniform of the Hatfield hunt was, as

already stated, light blue with white buttons. Finding them apt to get worn out before the coat, my father had a set of silver ones made. When one of these coats had become unfit for his wear he gave it to a servant, forgetting the buttons were silver: the man sold it to a Jew, supposing the buttons to be ordinary ones. Moses soon found this out, cut them off, and brought them back for sale, which of course he had a right to do, having purchased the lot fairly as it was. The man acquainted his master of the circumstance, expecting he would take the buttons at the price they were offered; but my father, with his usual right feeling, said, "As I gave you the coat as it was, I have no more right to the buttons than you have; if you can make a good bargain with the Jew, put it in your own pocket." The buttons being worth no more than their weight in silver, the man bought them and put them on a private coat of his own. The poor fellow shortly afterwards died in our house, left a little money and his clothes to a relation; but on his death-bed begged of my father, "if he thought his services had been faithful enough to merit such a distinction, that he would wear these buttons on his next hunting coat." I need scarcely say he did so, and wore them on every hunting coat he used afterwards, and he wore one at seventy-six years of age.

The description of persons that form the majority of a field at its fixture, for the case is often quite different after a trying burst, depends greatly on the locality of the hunt. When the late Lord Darlington hunted the Raby country, of course such a thing as a man residing in London was never seen out; but when Her Majesty's hounds turn out at the Magpies, Stoke Common, or Maidenhead Thicket, Londoners form no inconsiderable portion of the field. Fortunately for Davis, there is as yet no rail within some miles of his residence at the Kennel, otherwise so capital a companion, horseman, and huntsman, liked and respected as he is by all who know him, would be fairly eaten out of house and home by voracious friends. As it is, he owes no kindness to railroads; but make one to Ascot Heath, and if he did not anathematise the projector of it, he would be more than human. When as a boy and youth I had eight seasons with these hounds, I invariably found that, if they turned out at Tower Hill, or near Easthamstead Park, the field consisted of thirty or forty gentlemen and a farmer or two; if the Magpies was the fixture, even in those days such a motley group assembled there as called for the exertions and watchfulness of the yeomen Prickers, as much to save the hounds in the beginning of the chase as the deer at the end of it.

Many persons profess to like a good play: years past there were thousands of such persons, but there are only comparatively a few that do so at the present day. Now if we hear a person say he, or she, likes to go to the theatre with a party, depend upon it they care nothing for the play. Give me one companion, the centre of the house, and the pit, a few rows from the orchestra.

So a field of forty, or even a few more good sportsmen, is pleasant. This is enough to enliven the scene, and to make a man on the *qui vive* for his own and his horse's credit sake; but from a promiscuous crowd, Gods of the Chase deliver us!

It is quite true we see at some of the fixtures monster fields in Leicestershire, and among them an infinite variety of character; but it is only the variety existing among gentlemen and sportsmen. Wild riding, I grant, is to be seen there in the fullest sense of the word, and plenty of riders who, rather than make one baulk at all certain, would render the breaking a neck or two probable. "Excuse me, my dear fellow," or "I beg your pardon, Sir," would to some seem small amends for being sent a regular burster horse and all over a fence, from another riding too closely on a horse just "taking off;" but the apology would be admitted, and away sails the more fortunate of the two, leaving the other to get up as he and his horse can. Lucky, more than

lucky, if, while doing this, they do not get a second remembrance of there being others behind; in such a case the author of the second shock would inwardly ejaculate, "Why did not the fool lie still, and I should have cleared him." If, phœnix-like, rider and horse rise, not from the ashes but the soil, unhurt, and get again to the hounds, in meeting either of their more fortunate rivals, "I trust you were not hurt" is ample apology for such trifling occurrences.

If we accidentally tread on a man's stick or umbrella in the streets, common courtesy demands our picking it up and handing it to its owner with an apology; but assisting a man and horse out of a ditch would be such slow work, that in any aristocratic country an excuse for not doing so is held quite unnecessary. "Now let every one take care of himself," as the ox said when he began dancing among the frogs, is fully carried out in fast countries when men begin to ride: even the hounds know this; and to save himself, if he unfortunately gets among a crowd of horsemen in chase, I will back a Leicestershire hound against any dog living: one accustomed to the crowded part of London would be a fool to him, no hare can double, dodge, and avoid a greyhound at her haunches quicker than will a hound, that has had a season or two, a horse.

Aristocratic and exclusive as in a general way

is the Leicestershire country, even there, when the fixture was in the Loughborough part of it, a celebrated M. of H. used to say, "I shall have my little Nottingham stocking lot out to-day," and certainly a meet there and one at Bilsdon did show a difference as to exclusiveness; but let it be borne in mind that this said "little Nottingham lot" were quite a different sort of persons to those they supplied with the produce of Nottingham looms; the latter, emerging from Cheapside, Ludgate Hill, Fleet Street, &c., favoured the Surrey, or Jolliffe, or the Derby with their visits. I cavil not at any class of men if they are sportsmen, but even in this case I do most heartily dislike a superabundance of them. We are told we cannot have too much of a good thing: I deny this as regards a field.

Such opinions, ideas, and reminiscences as I have put down in the foregoing pages have arisen from rather unusually early and long-continued practice and participation in field sports of most sorts; they were in no shape collected under any idea of their being published. But in this case, allowing a portion of them may be erroneous, or supposing the whole to be so, their publication must be at all events harmless, for the reader can consult better authority, and in one case reject what he disapproves, and in the second reject the whole, if it seems advisable that he should do so.

I am not quite clear but that the first suggestion of publishing the result of my experience arose from the following recollection.

Hunting with the old Berkley, an old dog-fox in the Clicketting season was found near Beaconsfield, and gave us such a straight twister to the neighbourhood of the good town of Amersham, as left the field "few and far between." A stranger was out, spicy in all his appurtenances, quite correct, but new. He was mounted on a really magnificent chesnut horse, in shape, make, and style of going a hunter all over. He evidently knew his business, while it shortly became equally apparent that his master did not. He was a man of perhaps forty, a good-humoured looking soul, and no want of quaintness in his expression of countenance, yet perfectly unassuming in his carriage and manner. I, like others, addressed the stranger, and made my introduction by what seldom fails to meet courteous reception; namely, admiring his horse, who justly merited my encomiums in all things save one, his condition. Fine he was in his coat, fresh on his legs, and in high spirits and vigour, but the condition spoke of the dealers, not the hunting stable.

The hounds were scarcely in cover before one threw his tongue. The cheer of the huntsman showed the challenge came from one to be

trusted; others flew at the halloo and joined chorus. A minute after Pug showed close to me, broke at once, threw up his brush, and went off at score. Seeing him shortly change his point, go straight up what little wind there was, and taking into consideration the time of year, I felt satisfied he was a stranger, and made up my mind for a rattler, which he gave us, and ran to earth in his own country and home; he did not run up wind for nothing. Now to return to the stranger. He certainly did not, as Beckford represents some gentleman to have done, show any indication of attempting to catch the fox; but the moment the hounds showed they meant such undertaking, away he went, and right merrily he went. The hounds, with noses up, sterns down, and giving themselves no time for talking, went at such a pace that hurry them on as he might, the scent was so good, and Pug went so straight, he could do no harm to them. To do him justice, fear he had none; at all he went, and though sometimes nearly over the pommel of his saddle, at others thrown up till he stood over it like the Colossus at Rhodes, and at others indulging in a little lateral inclination, with a loose rein, his blooming chestnut topped all in gallant style; and though, as we sometimes do on seeing a man much inebriated on horseback, I expected to see the rider grassed, he kept on like a trump.

We had run perhaps three miles without a check enough to take a horse off his stride. "Well," thought I, "neighbour, if in your nag's condition he lasts much longer, I am no prophet." In a field or two further I saw the chestnut make a flounder on landing over a fence. "Oh! you're there, are you, at last," thought I. Our Mazeppa on the not wild, but now tame, horse gave him a cram, and sent him along across part of a deep ploughed field. "Who ho! for a hundred," thought I, "before you reach the next fence." I saw the chestnut stretch his neck out, give a swelling sigh and sob, his stroke shortened, and he stopped, regularly planted.

On the next hunting day neighbour was there, fresh as a four-year old, and looking as good-humoured as ever. I asked after the chestnut, and really felt much pleasure on learning he had shortly recovered, and was none the worse for his drilling. Neighbour was now on a fine bay, but just in the same condition. His master expressed surprise at his chestnut having come so suddenly to a *stand.* I perpetrated an execrable pun by telling him, it was because he brought him too suddenly to a *fixture;* adding, "It does not require my being a witch, my good Sir, to prognosticate that your bay will serve you just the same if you ride him the same, he being in the same condition as your chestnut."

This led to my explaining such effects of the want of condition as I presumed he was unacquainted with; and finding my suspicions correct as to his nags being in dealer's condition, I gave him (on his asking it) my advice, which was in words to this effect: —

"You have two remarkably fine horses, one of them a very clever one, as I have seen; but neither can be fit to go with hounds under six weeks. Not to lose your hunting, buy a couple of fifty-pound seasoned hack hunters; sell them when your own are ready. But do not risk four hundred from inflamed lungs, or broken necks or backs, from exhaustion, which you will risk, in all probability realise, if you ride your horses in their present state."

"I wish you would write a book for novices like me," most modestly said neighbour.

"I'll think of it," said I, at that time thinking I never should; but having, since that time, been, like his chestnut (but in another way), a good deal blown, but not, like him, regularly planted, I thought of neighbour's hint and took it.

CHAP. II.

Qualifications of a Hunter. — Amount of Work that may be expected of Him. — Discipline of old and young Hunters.

Having now given some of my general ideas of the hunting-field, I shall attempt to offer what I trust may be useful advice to some persons, on more particular points as regards the hunting-rider than the many more valuable treatises on the chase afford; and, in doing so, I shall adopt the plan of conversation with a friend, as in my work on "Practical Horsemanship."

Perceiving a gentleman coming across Windsor Great Park at a nice workmanlike hand-gallop, I looked carefully at him as he came towards me. His seat was firm, neat, and gentlemanlike, and his horse one that, seen going, would disgrace no hunting-field, and would be held a fine horse in Hyde Park. Coming to one of the small ditches, of which there are many in Windsor Park, the horse rushed at it, made a kind of stop before he jumped, and then took it at a kind of buck leap, which threw the rider a little out of place.

By this time I had recognised my friend and quondam pupil in road-riding. After the usual salutations, I complimented him on his seat, and admired his horse.

"I see," said my friend, laughing, "you begin with me in your usual way as a preliminary step."

"And pray," said I, "what may that be?"

"Why," said he, "to use stable phrase, you wipe me down with a soft duster."

"Where," said I, bowing, "I see so little superfluity to be removed, a cambric handkerchief even would suffice."

"And that handkerchief, to carry on the metaphor," said my friend, "you have scented pretty highly for my use: but I know, in the progress of my dressing, I shall get the currycomb *con amore*. So, to begin, how do you like my horse?"

"He is very handsome," said I, "and goes well."

"Is he well bred enough for a hunter?"

"Quite," I replied.

"How as to size?" said my friend.

"Precisely the size I should select," said I.

"Strong enough?" inquired he.

"Quite up to thirteen stone," said I; "and you do not ride more than twelve."

"I gave a good deal of money for him, I assure you," said he.

"I dare say you did," said I; "such a horse will always command such a price."

"Well," said he, "I in no way grudge the price. I bought him for a hunter; and as you think so well of him for that purpose, I am much pleased with myself for having purchased him."

"I am not aware," said I, "of having expressed myself in terms to lead you to such a conclusion. If I have, I must correct them."

"Why," said my friend, "you say he is big enough, strong enough, and shows breeding sufficient for a hunter, that he goes well, and is a fine horse; moreover, that he would command a strong price, by which I understand that he is worth it."

"This is all quite correct," I replied; "you asked my opinion of your horse merely as an *animal*, you did not ask it as to how far I approved of him as a *hunter*. The qualifications he has are all requisite or desirable in a hunter, but they alone do not make him one. That he is not one at present, the way he took the little water drain you rode him over satisfied me at once; and I see things about him that, I may fairly prognosticate, will prevent his ever becoming, or, at all events, lasting as one."

"And what are these?" said he, evidently

disappointed, but quite in good-humour, at my remark.

"I believe," said I, "hunters have pretty strong occasions for legs, and those of a good sort. Now, his are of a sort that I never knew carry a hunter long together. His have the worst faults I consider the legs of a hunter can have; they incline back at the knee, and he is particularly small just beneath it; in stable phrase, 'tied in under the knee:' in the next place, he turns his toes out. The first imperfection produces undue strains on the back ligaments of the leg; the second prevents free space for action of each ligament; and both together must, with the exertions of a hunter, produce lameness, and most probably of an irremediable character. The third imperfection, though it may permit his escaping hitting his ankles while merely ridden as a pleasure-horse, would, if fatigued, which all hunters must at times be, cause him to cut his legs to pieces. He is well calculated for what you are now doing with him, is a fine horse, goes in a gentlemanly form, and does it safely to his rider. For this, he is worth a strongish price; keep him at that. Most probably, if you wish to part with him, you will find a purchaser without loss. Ride him half a season with hounds (if he could go as long), he would be worth little or comparatively nothing."

"Well said, my friend; if you have not, as I foretold, currycombed *me*, you have my *horse* with no light hand."

"Alter your term, my good fellow," said I, "and you will be right: I have said little or nothing against your *horse*, but I allow a good deal against your *hunter*; but as you compliment me by asking my opinion of hunters, I will write something for you on that subject."

I did so to the following purport.

Supposing a man to determine to become a regular hunting-man, and that he has time, health, nerve, and money to enable him to become such, he must first secure his stud. Many persons may naturally say, that "before he gets the stud he should learn to ride them." This seems a quaint, and somewhat stringent, observation, I admit; but I shall attempt to answer it by supposing a case of quite a different character.

A girl or novice wishes to become a proficient on an instrument; it certainly is not necessary to purchase the best that money can get, while she is merely thrumming the gamut; but a certain proficiency being obtained, it would not do to practise fine and difficult pieces on a poor instrument, if we wished the pupil to cultivate a chaste ear, as well as good execution.

It is somewhat thus with a man wishing to become a hunting rider. It is quite true that

before he gets a stud he should learn to *ride*. But riding a hack on the road will not teach a man to ride a hunter across country, though it is the A B C to his doing so. Hence, to have the stud, or, at all events, a horse or two of such description as we infer the stud to be composed of, is desirable, and even necessary, to the learning to ride them. Purchasing one hunter will certainly teach a man to ride *him*, and greatly assist him in riding others. It would be proper enough to put a pupil on a thoroughly made, safe, and pleasant hunter: but if he confined his practice to riding such a horse, he would never be able to make the most of any other sort; and if a man aspires to become quite a workman, he must learn to be able to ride in any country, and any sort of horse fit for a gentleman to mount as a hunter; to do this he should ride in different countries and a variety of horses.

Assuming, therefore, that as it *is* desirable to have a fine instrument in order to practise fine music, and that it is also desirable to have a horse with hunting qualifications to enable the rider to practice hunting riding, we will turn our attention to the consideration of what is necessary in point of qualifications to constitute a hunter.

At the present day, there is no horse in existence requiring such a combination of good qualities as the hunter. There was a time when the best

judges of horses held it as a maxim, that "a good hunter could be purchased any day, but a good hack not more than once a year;" and in bygone days such a maxim was perfectly just. Any horse that could bear six or seven hours' fatigue, gallop a moderate pace, and jump safely at very moderate fences, was a hunter: but in those days the hack, to be a perfect one, required a multitude of good qualities, — he wanted as much speed, when called on, as the hunter, good temper, the best of action, in all his paces, going with ease to the rider and himself, not too hasty but always ready to go, a perfect mouth, perfect safety, the best of legs and feet, and the best of constitutions, to which must be added indomitable game; for while the hunter has the excitement of the cry of hounds, and the bustle of a crowd of horsemen, to keep his spirits up, the hack has nothing but the gameness of his nature to enable him to finish with cheerfulness and safety the last twenty of a journey of sixty or sometimes eighty miles, in thirteen or fourteen hours. Time was, and indeed not more than a century back, when it was only on the high road that a carriage could travel at anything beyond a foot pace, with an occasional jog-trot; and even on the best turnpike roads six miles an hour was held fair work; in fact, the mails astonished the whole country in undertaking to do eight. Under such circumstances, a

really safe and good hack was invaluable to men who, from motives of business or pleasure, wished to get over the country with expedition; and this fully justified them in valuing such a horse as a greater treasure than a good hunter. I remember, as a boy, a friend of my father's had a horse he always rode as a hack in summer, and as cover hack in winter. This horse looked a hunter all over. Some one asked why he never hunted this horse: "No," said he, "he is too valuable as a hack to risk him with hounds." Now-a-days such horses are quite at a discount; for anything that is good looking, safe on a smooth road, pleasant to ride, and has that kind of knee-up action that would some years since have caused his immediate rejection, is quite good enough for a hack. A pleasant riding horse is now, and possibly ever will be, wanted; but a thorough game hack is uncalled for; for who that had sixty miles to go would ride that distance on a high road, when he can now go quicker and far pleasanter in a light trap, and four times as fast by a railroad? and even that I hold pleasanter than riding a distance on a high road. I have heard old men mention many persons they knew who, a century back, would give their hundred for a good hack, when fifty was thought a strongish price for a hunter.

These two horses have, therefore, quite changed places since the days I refer to. To be in all

particulars a good hunter, HE must now be the *good horse*, for ridden as hunters now are in countries where hounds go like greyhounds, unless a horse is really good he cannot live at the pace. It is true there are horses that would bring a long price, though it is known that, figuratively speaking, they are not worth a farthing after the first burst; and such horses are really valuable to certain men of large fortune: such a horse is probably most brilliant in his performance for thirty minutes, his master then jumps on his second horse, the first goes home, and is not wanted again for eight or ten days. Now supposing this to be the case, on a rough calculation of what this horse costs in keep, his share of strappers, stud groom, stabling, and so forth, his master is riding him at a trifle under eighteen pence a minute, and at the rate of four pounds some shillings per hour for the time he rides him.

I know a man particularly fastidious in his snuff and cigars; for the particular kind he takes of the first he pays tenpence an ounce, and for very choice and old cigars he gives anything that is asked him. I know he gave a shilling a piece for some said to have belonged to the late Duke of Sussex; of each of the cigars he buys he only smokes half, and then declares "the aroma becomes vitiated." Now he has only to ride at eighteen pence per minute, and his hunting,

snuffing, and smoking, would make a very gentlemanly amount of expenditure.

Such a horse as I have mentioned is certainly a very clever hunter, and affords the rider a great treat for the short time he is carried by him; but we cannot call a horse who would shut up if hounds went a few fields beyond what in racing phrase we should term "his length" a GOOD hunter, that is, he is not comparatively so; and yet, if a horse can go brilliantly for thirty minutes over a flying country, he must not be called half a bad one, though he is not one to bear long-continued fatigue. Now, singular as the assertion may at first appear, if I were a man of very large fortune I would never wish to ride what are commonly held to be good horses, that is, very lasting ones, for such usually take more care of themselves than I like; and, personally, I would not ride the best horse in the world twice if I had to be "getting him along," and driving him at every fence he came to. Such are good horses for men who hunt three times a week with a couple; but for a man who wishes to be carried pleasantly, they are execrable, for it is the difference between being carried like a gentleman for amusement, or like a whip while doing his duty.

I never could bear riding horses that were not, in stable phrase, a little "above their work." Now there are two ways of having them always so.

The man who keeps a stud of fourteen or fifteen hunters may do this and hunt six days a week, having a second horse out each day; but a man who keeps but few, if he wishes to have his horses as fit to go as those of his wealthy brother sportsman, must limit his hunting to the strength of his stable; he may (if from the fixture he anticipates a regular clipper) occasionally treat himself to having a second horse out; but he must also occasionally, if he has had a burster with a first fox, go home; for ditto with a second would probably prevent his horse coming again for ten or a dozen days. By this management I have, with my short stud, at times hunted six days a week; but to do this a man must not take liberties with his horses. I do not call getting a good place and keeping it taking liberties, for I am quite satisfied that a man who judiciously goes straight distresses his horse the least; but then he must have tact, judgment, and a watchful eye, to make the most of his horse at proper times, and in proper situations; and, what is still more necessary, to (if I may use the expression) make the *least* of him when and where he can do so without losing his place: this is done by regulating the pace and form of your horse's going in accordance with the ground you are going over, by never omitting to take a pull at him the moment you find he wants it, by taking

every fence, if the choice is given, at a part that calls for the least exertion to him, by stopping and turning his face to the air the instant a check enables you to do so, by being on the alert to go the moment hounds "hit it off again," so as not to have ground to make up, which will often beat a horse in three or four fields' length. Never mind a good-humoured quiz from a more wealthy brother sportsman, but in "slow going" way, if you see a check is likely to last five minutes, jump off your horse's back, but be ready to as quickly jump on again. Take it as a true fox-hunting maxim, though one of my own, "never lose a second of time;" it is the true spirit of fox-hunting in all its appliances in the field. Above all things, nothing should be more avoided than larking in going to hounds, in the field, or on coming home; men with large studs may do it, but it takes a great deal out of horses. Have a shy across country if you like it, if your horses, from some circumstance, are short of work; it will then do them good: but a small stud cannot stand larking on hunting days. Ride with hounds like a sportsman; ride to keep with HOUNDS, but never ride when hunting to keep with MEN.

There are men who are not very particular as to their horse's looks as regards condition, or their being quite equal to, or a little above their work; and horses in such state will go through runs

however severe they may be; but they are *made* to do it, and consequently do not do it like gentlemen's hunters. I could find in the Oxford or Cambridge stables, hunters that are let out by the day, who could be made to do quite as much as the highest-priced horse out, go as straight, and go as long. I never mounted a hired hunter in my life, but have seen many others on them, so I speak as an eye-witness in this matter; but I should feel no gratification in riding such. I hate the idea of making either horse or man do anything for me by compulsion; do it willingly, or I have no pleasure in what is done. I could avail myself of the capability of an unwilling horse to fetch a doctor for a friend in a case of emergency, and would draw his capabilities out if steel and whipcord could do it; but I would no more ride such a horse for my own gratification as a hunter, be he the best in the world, than I would get the doctor to trepan me under a similar idea. Still less would I ride a horse unwilling from overwork; and the better I knew the animal in nature to be, the more it would go against me to call on him for efforts that I knew must be made with pain to himself: in fact, for whatever purpose we use a horse, I hold it to be indispensable that he does his work with a certain degree of pleasure to himself, if we expect to derive any pleasure from his exertions. The moment work becomes

slavery to a horse, I consider it slavery to ride or drive him. What renders work slavery must not be calculated by the quantum of the work, but by the capability of the animal to endure it. Who would ride a four or five years' old hardy constitutioned race-horse in training for pleasure? I would as soon ride an ass; in fact, many a well-used lively one would be the pleasanter animal. I allow such a race-horse as I allude to probably is in the best possible state and form he can be for great performance, but his work having necessarily been made a bore to him, renders it a bore to ride him. He is a machine wound up to the highest point to qualify him for a certain exertion to win money, and that is all that is looked to by trainer or owner.

The horses we ride or drive for pleasure should also be in the highest possible state of condition for the purposes for which we use them; and this they may be with still having vivacity and energy enough to make them do their work with willingness. This difference may be explained by comparing a hard-worked country plate-horse with a two years' old; both are in training, and both, we will suppose, in their best form; but the training of the one is a perfect bore to him, while to the other it is little more than healthy recreation. The first, on being saddled for exercise, will stretch and yawn like a man unwillingly aroused from

sleep; *he* may be safely enough walked straight out of the stable, and be kicked along to the exercise ground: the other probably may require a few turns round the yard, or some enclosed place, before the boy could venture to take him on to an open down; he would walk, canter, gallop, or trot, if permitted to do so, cheerfully, pleasantly, and probably safely. The other feels a gallop a bore, a walk no recreation, and would (unless watched) just as soon blunder on his nose as stand on his legs. In a very mitigated degree, something like this is the difference between a hunter above his work and one below it. The absolute capabilities of both may be equal, but the cheerfulness or the reverse with which the work is done is widely different. The reader can now choose in which of the two ways he makes up his mind to be carried.

I will suppose that some one may determine, from the different representations I have made, to have his horses quite up to, or a little above, their work. To enable him to do this, I must give him a hint that he may find by no means unnecessary.

There is no doubt but that in a general way a man may calculate, that with a given number of horses he may, on an average, expect to get a certain number of days' hunting during the month; and such calculation would hold good

where a large stud is kept: for instance, there are packs where nine horses are kept for the huntsmen and whips; there are others where from fifteen to eighteen are kept for the same purpose. And such a stud will exhibit, taking all the horses together, a fair average of capability among them as regards endurance of work. Among them, probably, the generality will, barring illness and accident, come regularly once a week. Some may occasionally, from blank days, be able to come twice; while others, more delicate in constitution, or from particularly severe runs, will not be able to appear again under ten days, or in some cases a fortnight: thus the whole, by (in sporting phrase) "giving and taking," keep up the average amount of work in a limited time.

The case, however, becomes widely different with a small number of horses; and supposing my reader to be one of many who only keep, we will say, three hunters for their use: if he means with these to hunt on an average three days a week, he must be careful that his horses are of an average sort, for should he happen to get hold of two delicate ones out of the three, he will find that though eighteen horses will be quite certain to carry three men six days a week, three are by no means certain to carry one man three. If he gets three fair constitutioned ones, he will do; for as the exertion called forth in a horse during a

day's hunting is by no means always the same, if an unusually severe run takes something unusual out of one of his nags, so a very light day's work may enable his Monday's horse to come again on the Friday; but however stout and good a horse may be, he cannot be expected to stand very frequent extra work to favour a delicate stable companion: it will thus be seen that the fewer horses a man keeps the better they must be, that is, so far as endurance of regular exertion goes.

The man of forty thousand a year can afford to keep a stud-groom who never lays a hand on a brush; so he may keep two or three or more favourite flyers who can only on an average come once in ten days: but the man of eight hundred or a thousand a year must keep men who can and will strap, and must keep horses who in their vocation can strap also; if he does not, he must hunt very seldom, or ride horses under their work.

There are two especial circumstances that occasion hunters to be unfit for the work they are called upon to perform. The one is too little work, the other too much of it; for the want of proper feeding we do not contemplate as likely to occur in any gentleman's stables. I am quite aware that where any great performance is wanted, the horse overworked, as to work, would be a preferable animal to the one short of it; in

fact, the latter would be absolutely incapable of such exertion. Still, personally, I would at any time rather ride a horse a little above himself, and go home after the first burst, than ride a jaded dispirited automaton animal, though I might drive him through the best run man ever saw.

Of course, where horses are properly managed, they are seldom found in either of the states I have mentioned. One thing I am perfectly satisfied of, though in giving the opinion I premise to the reader it is one he must act on with great caution; nevertheless I am certain it is correct, "Where one gentleman's horse gets too much work, a great number get too little." When I use the term work, I do not mean the sort of work we give them for our use or amusement, but the sort of work necessary to bring them into a high state of condition. My meaning as to work might be very easily misunderstood; for instance, supposing a man to pay me the compliment of acting on any opinion of mine, he might say, "If other gentlemen's horses get too little work, it shall not be the case with mine. I will hunt each horse twice a week." In such a case, there can be no doubt but these horses would have work enough; in fact, a good deal too much, unless they hunted with hare-hounds, and those not over fast either. The great fault

in many horse-masters is, they work their horses too much when they want them, but are not careful that they get enough when they do not. Such work as I advocate, namely, strong exercise, raises the spirits from obvious reasons; it braces the nerves, invigorates the limbs, clears the wind, and freshens the constitution. Such is the effect a day's proper exercise has on the hunter, while, on the contrary, a day's hunting produces temporary lassitude, prostration of the spirits and animal powers: this will show the wide difference there must be in the energy and condition of the horse hunted once a week with proper exercise on the intervening days, and the horse hunted twice, and consequently prevented taking the work that invigorates, and getting too often that which enervates.

Old fashioned sportsmen might say, "My horse gets work enough when hunting, so let him rest himself when he is not." This might hold good enough when horses hunted with slow hounds, and were ridden perhaps twice a week. That sort of work kept them speedy enough, and their wind clear enough for the pace they were wanted to go; but it would be rather a novel system of training if we were to walk, canter, and gallop a race-horse for six or eight hours twice a week, and leave him idle the remaining five, that he might rest himself: it is as little to be expected

that a hunter can be brought to the condition he should be in by jading him one day and resting him three.

Persons are sometimes very much deceived as to the effect standing two or three days in the stable has on horses, by what they see of them when out. Doubtless the horse will fling himself about, snort, jump, and kick at anything that comes near him: this is not energy from standing in the stable, but delight at getting out of it; he feels an invigorating atmosphere in lieu of a heated and enervating one, but so far from this being genuine energy, he has no energy in him but for the moment. Some livery-stable groom might say, "There, Sir, he is fit to go a hundred miles for you;" when the truth would be, he was not fit to go twenty, and would probably realise the somewhat equivocal recommendation given by a low horse-dealer of a ten-pound nag, to a somewhat simple young gentleman: "Go! why, Lord love ye, I've known him go so far in one hour, it took him three to get back!"

We have frequently heard that all but extinct character, the country squire, accused of being somewhat boisterous in his hilarity: we seldom hear that brought forward as a characteristic of the man devoted to calculating tare and tret, the value of consols or counter goods. Whence arose this?—From a very simple cause. In the days of

country squires it was not held as "*gaucherie*" to indulge in a laugh, or considered indispensable to *ton* not to evince the slightest excitement on any occurrence in society; so the athletic pursuits of the squire causing him to be in the height of health and consequent spirits, a little elated him, and he indulged in a ringing laugh on the occasion. The cit glories over his turtle, and the next day takes some specific to stimulate the organs of digestion, that, from want of air and exercise, would otherwise be incompetent to their duty; the muscular country hunter and the livery-kept cob are prototypes of the above.

Another very great mistake is made by many persons, in considering that old horses should be indulged by an extra allowance of rest compared to that which is permitted the young ones of their stud. The incentive to such practice is an amiable, but it is at the same time a mistaken one. Old horses cannot bear *entire* rest; they may be favoured as to the frequency of calling forth great exertion from them, but a couple of days of entire rest brings on all their old aches and pains arising from work, blows, and falls. Exercise is life to them; it keeps the vital functions going, and limbs, that regular and daily exercise keep pliant, become stiff and rigid by continued absence of motion; any exertion, under such circumstances, is attended with pain: and if an old horse is still

in a state to work without pain to himself, the only way to enable him to do so is to keep him going. If a young horse should be stiff the day after hunting, in him all the vital functions are in such full play that rest will restore his limbs to their wonted elasticity; not so with the old one: his flagging energies must be quickened by motion, or swelled legs, general stiffness, and consequent disinclination to motion from the pain it creates, is the certain consequence.

In corroboration of what I state, I will refer to machineers, or, in other words, stage-coach horses. Many a team of these, composed of four highly bred old cripples, would gallop over their five or six miles of ground at the rate of fourteen miles an hour, and return the same stage in the evening, without, figuratively speaking, turning a hair, or requiring a touch of the whip, and would do such work better by far than young ones: and why they would do so arose from the following causes; being old cripples, as they were, they could be got, in stable phrase, "of a pretty good family;" that is, so very highly bred that had they been young or at all sound they could not have been purchased at coach price, and if under bred, they could not have stood the pace. Such highly bred horses had years of hard keep in them; the work they had all their lives been at had kept them

clear in their wind, and a fast pace had from use become natural to them.

If these same horses were put to a long stage, where they worked two days and rested one, the two rested horses would, so far from being in the best state of the four to commence their stage, come out of the stable as stiff as if they had no joints to their limbs; nor till they had hobbled and cantered a couple of miles could they settle to anything like a trot. Old hunters are, in a mitigated way, similarly affected by absence of exercise.

We all know that aged horses will stand more work than very young ones; but neither aged nor old horses will stand great exertion and long rest alternately.

In former times it was a frequent practice, if a hunter got a little stale, to "give the old horse a year's run;" and the groom would prognosticate, and the master feel assured, that old Topthorn would come up "as fresh as a four year old:" nor was the idea altogether a mistaken one *of its day*. Such long rest would in many cases and ailments prove beneficial to a horse returning to the slow work hunting was in such days; and getting gradually into hard keep again, and gradually getting again into the pace required of him, the year's run probably did prolong his hunting career, and answered the intended pur-

pose. But, now-a-days, if we were to throw an old horse totally out of the practice of fast work, and, still worse, out of hard keep, not one in twenty could ever be screwed up again (not to concert) but to hunting pitch: fortunate the owner, if he did not come up a roarer or broken-winded.

I will instance the veteran Mountjoy, the pedestrian: he can still perform extraordinary feats. Force him to lead a perfectly sedentary life for twelve months; he might by training and practice again walk well as an ordinary man, but the chances would be very great against his ever again being Mountjoy as he now is. Constant going still enables him to go, and so it does old horses.

Young horses, on the contrary, require a considerable length of comparative rest to recover from unusual exertion. They have not been long enough accustomed to it for habit to have familiarised its effects either to their limbs, muscles, or constitution, all of which suffer considerable temporary prostration by it, however little youthful spirits may make them show it. The old horse is so accustomed to exertion, that in him its chief effect is creating stiffness, which proper exercise carries off.

I do not attempt to account for it, while I state that it was rarely found that very young men could stand driving night coaches; we

might suppose that youth would better endure such harass than age. Such, however, was not usually found to be the case: thus it will be seen that in mankind, youth and more advanced age can equally bear considerable fatigue, but both can best bear it in a different way; and I have found it the same with horses.

We have now steeple-chase horses going at from ten to fifteen years old. I am quite clear that in nine cases in ten with these, if we were to throw them up for twelve months, they would never come out again in as good form as they are, however great screws and cripples some may be.

We know quite well that extreme exertion in youth is apt to come against us in age. I quite grant such to be a fact to be anticipated; but then the question may arise, "At what age is such effect likely to manifest itself?" This requires some little explanation. Of course the amount of effect, and the age at which it will probably be felt, depends on circumstances and also on persons.

All persons more or less possess considerable elasticity of limbs at twenty years of age; how long this may last depends, in most cases, on how far the situation, circumstances, constitution, and inclination of the person permit, or induce him to take the exercise and practice necessary to

keep this elasticity in play. We see public dancers, at forty, whose elasticity is not diminished perceptibly to the eye of the audience. It is thus with some runners, walkers, and vaulters; but if, at the age of twenty, any one of these were to leave off his usual training exercise, in a very few weeks his elasticity would be most visibly decreased, in a few months most materially impaired, in two or three years so irretrievably injured as probably never to be completely restored; and at forty he would, if he again tried any of his former exploits, find himself about as elastic as a well-dried blackthorn walking-stick.

I have heard it remarked, and particularly in reference to steeple-chase horses, that quadrupeds do not seem to lose their elastic powers proportionally so early in life as men do; and this remark is natural enough when we daily see aged horses jump as wide and high as those of four or five years old, while, on the other hand, we rarely see a man of even thirty able to cope with youths of eighteen in exercise requiring great elasticity of limb.

It is not my province here to enter on any disquisition on the parallel periods when the elastic qualities of biped and quadruped decline, or how long, under ordinary circumstances and treatment, they may be preserved in each; but why

they appear to last longer in horses than men, I think I can account for with fair reasons on my side.

We do not leave it to the inclination of the horse whether or not he will continue that sort of exertion, training, and practice necessary to keep his elasticity, as to speed or jumping, in its fullest vigour. Those horses we see at twelve or fourteen jumping so corkily as to excite our surprise, have been constantly kept in practice of their elastic powers; so, till absolute infirmity occurs, they still retain them. But if we lent a hunter to an elderly man to jog-trot, an airing only, if he took to the horse at eight, and rode him till he was fourteen years old, I rather think we should then find such a horse, and a man of a proportionate corresponding time of life and habits, about equally unwilling and unable to take a sixteen feet brook.

The training necessary to enable man or brute to achieve any athletic feat beyond ordinary exertion, I can, from repeated practical personal experience, assure such readers as have not been subjected to it, is anything but pleasant, — the sensations felt when brought into high condition are decidedly so; so are the sensations we feel in viewing a sublime prospect from the summit of a mountain; but the walk up is far from a luxury, and in fact, when daily repeated, becomes

a bore; so does the daily exertion required of a man by his trainer.

But without the necessity of going into regular training, the exertion required to keep up elasticity is such as very few men, left to follow their own inclinations, will continue. So soon as this ceases elasticity decreases, and man becomes in the situation of the horse I suppose to be jog-trotted by the elderly gentleman. And, as I think I may say, ninety-nine men in a hundred will indulge in ease if they can; so it is that we do not see more than one man in a hundred that at middle age has even a moderate portion of elastic feat about him, though the horse of proportionate age has.

The old masters of hunting establishments would say, that to do a horse justice he should not be backed till five years old, hunted at all till six, or go through a run till seven. I doubt not that if we wanted a mere useful animal, and one to live so long that we should grow grey in riding him, our worthy ancestors were right; and this is something like what they did want, and probably often got; but I must hazard the opinion, that if we want extraordinary speed and elasticity, the practice of such must, with a proper consideration of a tender age, be called forth early, or in very few cases will they become prominent.

If a man merely wants to walk a quadrille as

a gentleman, or undergo the trifling more exertion of a polka, he can well do this if he never put a foot in the first position till he was five-and-twenty; but if a man was intended for an opera dancer, and never straightened an instep till that age, we might as well expect a *gavotte* from Gog or Magog as from him.

I am quite willing to agree, that calling forth powers of speed, or jumping, at an early age may cause an earlier fading of such powers than would be the case if their practice was deferred to a later period. I am equally willing to allow, that it is not necessary that opera dancing *should* be carried to the pitch it is; nor is it that hounds should go the pace they do, still less that leaps undreamt of a century ago should be taken in steeple-chases; but as aristocratic fashion patronises such lancing, if men of sense, high education, fashion, and fortune decree that hounds must be as fast as race-horses, and that steeple-chasing shall be a national sport, each will go on, and, what is more, means (that is, appliances) must somehow be found to gratify prevailing taste. If we determine to have extraordinary exertion of animal functions, we must adopt those measures that conduce to bring them to the greatest perfection; and if, by producing certain qualities in a supereminent degree, we shorten their durability, as we cannot have everything,

why so it must be. Of the propriety of all this, or its reverse, I leave those competent to the task to give their opinions; I only speak of facts as I see them.

Stating, or rather giving, an opinion, as I have done, that strong and constant exercise is absolutely essential to keep the hunter in that state of condition requisite to perform the work wanted in our present style of hunting, I might be asked, whether I mean he should undergo the discipline of the race horse? To this I could only give a qualified reply, namely, "At particular times he must undergo work very closely bordering on it," and principally for the following reasons: —

It was held by our ancestors of, we will say, the last century, that it was not expected that hunters, or indeed hounds, could be in really good wind and condition in the early part of the season; it was further a frequent remark of those days that "just as horses, hounds, and even foxes, were in a state to show the best sport, hunting ceased," and doubtless the remark was a perfectly correct one: and we will now look to the causes that made it so.

In the first place, the reason why horses could not possibly be in hunting condition early in the season, arose from their being, during the summer, totally thrown out of it, the lower-bred, phlegmatic, thick-skinned ones came up loaded with soft flesh,

in short, exemplifications of walking feather-beds; the higher bred ones showed as comparative skeletons, with their feet battered to pieces by stamping at and running about to evade the flies. Yet was this system held out as a sovereign invigorator of the animal powers and spirits. I think there can be scarce a doubt but the hunting groom, on such horses returning to his charge, treated all alike, that is, each got his three doses of physic, each got the same feeding and exercise, and having got this, all was considered to have been done necessary to condition; the fat ones, from the extra distress their load of flesh occasioned, in time worked it off, and the thin ones from returning to proper feeding worked it on.

This answered the moderate expectations of the owners of those days; and, fortunately for the horses, the hounds were in little better wind at the commencement of the season than they, and going out early the fox was found, either in the state of a gourmand with his supper undigested, or like the young rake, tired with his night's ramble, so he was as little disposed to go as the hounds were unable to make him, or the horses to follow them. I mean this in no vein of ridicule; on the contrary, a great deal of real hunting was seen under such circumstances, and "Hark on! the drag I hear," awakens ideas of really more hunting delight than a race from an

artificial or natural gorse cover. I only speak of such hunting as showing the different state horses must now be in on commencing the season.

We now meet at eleven: foxes have had time to digest their midnight meal, and recover from their night's ramble. In lieu of hunting in large covers up to their kennel, we come on them at once. Pug is awake; here there is no "dodging," no "running his foil;" go he must, or die where he is. Like ministers of olden date, he takes a hint and at once goes out, when he finds the majority gives him a hint to do so: now-a-days they do not show the white feather by so doing; but Pug shows the white tip of his brush and does. It is all well enough to hesitate in giving up the emoluments of office, whether the adverse party be Whigs or Tories, but where life or death is the stake it becomes another affair, particularly, as in Pug's case, where the open-mouthed majority are anything but Liberals.

Hounds are now brought out in as fine wind and condition as greyhounds at a coursing meeting, and save in the practice of endurance of long-continued fatigue, are as fit for all hunting purposes in November as in February; so must, therefore, be the horses.

For some time prior to the first regular fixture, the hunter requires pretty much the same exercise as the race-horse gets (till within a fortnight or

three weeks of coming to post); he must, to bring him out fit to go, get his sweats (a thing unheard of with the hunter in former times); but, when we take into consideration that in fast countries with a good scent, the first mile and a half is in point of pace very nearly the same as the first mile and a half of a two mile race, the necessity of it will be seen; and, be it further borne in mind, hunters go over heavier ground than race-horses, and carry much heavier weight, to say nothing of the exertion of fencing.

We will suppose the master of a stud to be obliged to be absent for three weeks: a good-natured but injudicious groom might determine that his horses should enjoy themselves during this interval of hunting. I might applaud the man's kind feeling and intentions, but I should very much deprecate his judgment; such treatment would be anything but kindness to the horses, inasmuch as daily exertion, supposing it to be more than is absolutely pleasant, is far preferable to an occasional day of severe distress, which must as certainly follow the want of proper preparation as the night succeeds the day.

When horses come to be regularly hunted, the regular training, or rather exercise, they had undergone must be remitted; a day or two of comparative rest during the week becomes necessary; but with any horse, if in health, a short

walk to just stretch his limbs and give him the advantage of air, if the day is fine, is in most cases advantageous, and with old horses apt to be stiff after hunting indispensable.

Rest we know to be, in its crude sense, the absence of motion, and such rest for a given time is requisite to recruit the jaded limb and spirits; few hours of this suffice for that purpose: the next stage of rest is the absence of exertion; this is also necessary for a given time, and provided this is allowed, the prolonging the rest without any motion at all would prove anything but beneficial or conducive to bringing back the energy of those functions that had been impaired by over-exertion; too long continued absence of all motion *causes* stiffness instead of carrying it off.

A man after a day of unusual fatigue may very fairly indulge in a few hours extra bed the next morning; he may even indulge further by reclining at times on a sofa after rising; but if in health, he must be the most indolent of the indolent, if the weather was tempting, did he not in the course of the day feel an inclination to take a stroll on the lawn before his window: this might surely be called a day of rest, and a man doing this would rise on the second morning fresher in mind, body, and limb, than one who might have passed the thirty-six hours in bed.

In a state of disease, that is, if that disease be of an inflammatory nature, absolute rest is certainly necessary, in some cases even the absence of all motion is desirable; and if, after severe exertion, any symptoms of fever manifest themselves, perfect rest and quiet are necessary to prevent results that probably might end fatally. But that which may be quite necessary in a case of over-excitement of the general temperament, is neither necessary nor conducive to the restoration of the vigour and pliability of the limbs.

The question might naturally be put as to whether the work hunters must go through to bring them out in first-rate condition, does not tend to impair the durability of their limbs and constitution? To a certain extent I should say it probably does; that is, there may be fewer horses going with hounds at from twelve to twenty years old than there were formerly. Great excitement and great exertion naturally tend to wear, the one the constitution, the other the limbs. Still I do not consider it does this so much as might be imagined.

There can be no doubt, but, if we purchased two pair of, we will say, gig wheels, each made of equally good materials, and each equally well put together, and ran the one pair three hundred miles per week, and the other only two, one pair would be used up long before the other; because

the wear upon each, *while going*, would be the same, and practice would in no shape diminish the effect the work would have on the wheel. But with animate objects it is quite different; for with them habit and practice *do* diminish the effect both of peculiar work and peculiar regimen.

The effect of the canter, or even trot, formerly given to a horse coming up from grass loaded with fat, and accustomed for three or four months to total idleness, was possibly as great as the increased work we now give horses has on an animal whose limbs and muscles have been kept to a certain degree braced by proper exercise and proper food, during the same period of time. The leg that is in a flaccid and debilitated state from total idleness and soft grass food, would be quite as likely to fly, or, in more familiar phrase, to give way, in a common canter as would the one in a more healthy and vigorous state in the exercising gallop.

If we were to select two horses of equal soundness of limb and constitution, and feed, exercise, stable, and work the one as was done a hundred years since, and treat and work the other as we do hunters of the present day, probably the first might last more hunting seasons than the latter; but for the number of seasons the latter might last, he would be by far the most energetic animal; and, with all our fast work with hunters,

I rather think the number of fired and swelling legs, and thick-winded horses, found in the stables of our ancestors far exceeded those found in our fastest Leicestershire stables now. One thing is quite certain; — horses in the then called condition of 1790, could not live a forty minutes' burst in a fast country in 1850, and, if they did, probably would never see another; at least so far as the majority of horses is concerned.

I hope I shall never be induced to allow that there is less humane feeling among fox-hunters as regards animals than among any other class of persons; but from habit, and difference of ideas, the result of habit, feeling is exhibited in different ways. A lady or an antisporting man would indulge the favourite pony or cob in a five miles an hour pace; the fast man would not. But the lady and the gentleman would unhesitatingly keep the pet pony or cob waiting in the cold, while one indulged in conversation on the last new fabric for a dress, or the other on the present value of three per cent. consols or the struggles of wool *versus* cotton: — the fox-hunter would not let his favourite horse endure this to save the whole Stock Exchange, stock-brokers, bank, and directors, from annihilation. The prize-fighter thinks nothing of seeing his dearest friend battered to a mummy for an hour and a half. Why? Because he would think

little of undergoing the same in his own person; but show him a suffering child, or a female treated with brutality, his feeling in either case might be found as soft as those of the most effeminate being that boasts the form of man, and would probably lead him to take a far more active and commendable part than the latter in allaying the sufferings of the one or advocating the cause of the other. Let us then throw to the winds the twaddle of the inane and spiritless, who term the fox-hunter inhumane for sending his horse at a fence that we will allow risks neck and limb: it may be unnecessary risk, and we will, to please some, call it so, but, at all events, it is not selfish risk, for rider and horse share in the danger. It is true, horses, that is, hunters, do go now at an awful pace; but their condition enables them to do it, and, as I have before said, I believe they do it with as little distress as hunters did their work fourscore years ago. Neither pace nor fencing lays the fox-hunter open to any charge of inhumanity to his horse. Inhumanity is only shown where he perseveres with a horse in distress. Here I will join issue with any one in expressing unqualified disgust at such conduct; and the inhumanity would be just the same whether it was shown towards so good an animal as Brunette in a steeple-chase, Advance in a run of Leicestershire, or a pursive cob in a ride from

Richmond, if each were in a state of equal distress, though arising from different causes and exertions.

We cannot have all we wish in this world. I therefore consider we are only left to the choice of whether we will ride horses in half-and-half condition, with slow hunting, for twelve seasons, or, allowing that severe exercise does shorten duration of animal power, do so in tip-top form, with fast hounds, for a shortened period. So far as regards the amount of kindness or the reverse towards the animal by the two different systems, I believe it, on the aggregate, would be pretty much the same.

CHAP. III.

Harry Hieover's Visit to a Stud. — The model Stud-groom. — Remarks on different Hunters.—Racing, Steeple-chasing, and Hunting. — Practical Experiments.

Some time after sending the foregoing hints to my friend as regards the qualifications necessary in a hunter, the general amount of work that, under ordinary circumstances, may be expected of him, and the discipline necessary to bring and keep him in form to perform his work, I received a letter inviting me to his country-house, and to see the stud he had selected for his first campaign in the hunting-field. After my arrival, and prior to being introduced to his horses, he paid me the compliment of expressing a hope that I should like their appearance. This could but call forth an assurance of my not doubting but such would be the case.

On our way to the stables, my friend telegraphed a remarkably spicy gentleman, who, on approaching, touched his hat, in a manner half-knowing and half-patronising: whether the condescension was to me, his master, or both, it was impossible to conjecture.

"I want to show Mr. Hicover the horses, Forester," said my friend.

"Humph! aristocratic and fox-hunting enough as to name," thought I, "if the blood was in the right strain."

Mr. Forester took from his waistcoat pocket a very neat gold hunter, to which was attached a very corresponding chain fixed to the button-hole and finished off by a fox's head key.

"It will be stable-hour, Sir, in twenty minutes," said the lord, not valet, d'écurie.

"Very well," said my friend, taking my arm, and leading me away from the hallowed precincts of Mr. Forester's dominion, in a manner that plainly showed me any advice on my part would be of no avail; inasmuch as, if given to my friend, he would not dare to act on it, and if given to Mr. Forester, it would be considered about as necessary (though a little more presumptuous on my part) as holding a candle to the sun.

"Forester is very particular," remarked his master.

"In his dress I perceive he is," said I; "and, I presume, does not often disturb its arrangement by any plebeian exertion."

But Mr. Forester was too important a personage for me to have passed over without proper notice of his dress, which I now describe. His

hat was quite a proper one for a gentleman, and put on with appropriate regard to taste; his hair curled, naturally or artificially, just as hair should curl to be becoming, while its glossy black showed off to advantage a face of gentlemanly delicacy and paleness; the features were good, but with a cunning sinister cast, showing a very laudable desire to be a rogue, and the full complement of a puppy; his cravat was proper enough as to colour, dark blue with white spots, — the tie altogether faultless, fastened by a gold pin, showing the plate of a race-horse; the coat black, Newmarket cut, made so as not to button, but fastened at the second button-hole by blood-stone coat studs; his waistcoat a most proper length, dark blue, the stitches white, flap lower pockets, the upper ones artistically cut with a transverse slope, and the corners critically rounded off: by the cut of the trowsers, I guessed Mr. Forester did not patronise a mere coat maker in their structure; they were plain drab, but symmetrically cut, and fitted to a very light boot as if stitched to it. Such was the head functionary of my friend's stables: his age might be thirty.

"I see," said my friend, "Forester is not one of your sort."

"Not precisely," said I; "but I never had the means more than the inclination to employ such superior artistes."

"I assure you," said my friend, "he was very highly recommended to me."

"May I ask by whom?" said I.

"By Mr. ——'s stud groom," replied my friend.

"I have not," said I, "the advantage of any personal acquaintance with the gentleman you mention, but being tolerably well acquainted with the character and habits of most known sporting men, I can only tell you I would not trust the gentleman *himself* in my stable, much less a man of his."

"You surprise me," said my friend.

"Yes," said I, "and the gentleman in question has surprised a good many till they knew him."

"But," added my friend, "Forester has lived with several noblemen."

"Who," said I, "finding him so fine a gentleman, considered it a pity to keep him in the situation of a servant; at all events, if he has served so many he cannot have served any long: but we will not prejudge the man from his appearance, which being so superior, may I ask the extent of your stud, which, I should say, ought to be large to require a superintendent that, I should imagine, does not value his pretensions at a lower rate than they merit?"

"I have only five," said my friend, "in my hunting stable; I give Forester a hundred a-year,

a bed and sitting-room, and his eatables and drinkables are supplied in the house."

"No bad berth," said I; "and may I ask what help Mr. Forester considers it necessary to have for five horses?"

"He has two strappers and a lad," replied my friend.

"Which lad, I presume," replied I, "acts as valet to Mr. Forester?"

"I believe he does what he wants," said my friend.

"Yes," said I, "and I dare say in this way his wants are more than your own. But possibly now we may be permitted to see the nags."

On entering the stable Mr. Forester rose from a bench placed against the wall; the lad was hand-rubbing one horse's legs, the men brushing over two others, all proper enough: the stable was certainly scrupulously clean, the appurtenances to it all of the most expensive sort money could buy, and plenty of them; its arrangement, however, partook too much of the London dealer, and it was hot as a forcing-house: on one horse I perceived one of the men rubbing out a stain, showing marks of recent sweat. Remarking this man as having quite the cut and action of a stableman about him, I said to him,

"Your stable is rather warm, my friend."

"Yes, Sir," respectfully replied the man, pulling

his forelock, groom fashion, in the absence of a hat, "I tell Mr. Forester so."

"Go on with your horse," most impertinently said the latter to the man.

"Mr. Hieover thinks your stable too warm, Forester," said his master.

"I can't have horses fine if stables aint a proper warmth," replied he, "nor no man can."

"I will," thought I, "make them too warm to hold you, Mr. Forester, if my friend intends me to be his adviser."

Rather to my surprise, my friend ventured the bold step of ordering each horse to be stripped for my inspection without asking permission from his stud groom, — a step that gentleman evinced his proper reprobation of by coolly walking out of the stable.

Of course, I made no remarks on the nags before the men, and on our inspection being completed, I was shown into the hack stable. Here I found a very neat groom and his helper brushing over two horses; the men looked like workmen, — the very speak of the brush on the curry-comb, and the way they were both handled, showed the stableman in each, while the condition of the horses showed they were intrusted to proper hands. Here were two very clever looking horses that I understood were chiefly used for harness, though looking far more like hunters in shape,

and far more still in condition, than four out of the five under Mr. Forester's direction; the third was my old friend I had seen in Windsor Park; the fourth my friend's direct road hack, and, as I was told, a trotter. Here was nothing to find fault with either in horses or men, and I gladly complimented the latter on the care evidently taken with their charge.

The first dinner-bell ringing stopped further stable comments, my friend, when in the country, venturing on the very anti-aristocratic practice of dining at five. After a man has partaken of an excellent salmon cutlet, part of a sweetbread, duck, as waiters term it, "to follow," the whole finished with some jelly, he is far on the road to being on tolerably good terms with things in general; but when to these are added some excellent sparkling Moselle, warmed by some old sherry, and the palate prepared for the dessert by a glass of Curaçoa, he is mostly in good humour with every thing and every body: so was I, save and except Mr. Forester and four of his horses.

As I had commenced discussing my friend's beeswing, he led on to the discussion of his horses, commencing, in his opinion I suppose *par excellence*, with his hunters.

"Well," said he, "may I hope you saw something you liked in my little stud?"

"I must be very fastidious indeed if I did not,"

said I, "for, in truth, they are of all sorts, sizes, and dimensions."

"Why," replied my friend, "I think I have heard you say that one sort of horse is not fitted for all countries, and I have not quite made up my mind where I mean to make head-quarters in this my first campaign."

"You seem to have overlooked, in your wish to have something to suit different countries, that, supposing you had got this, you would in such case have only one really effective horse for the country you may fix on; and as a still greater drawback," said I, "though a particular sort may be, and really are necessary for particular countries, — a bad sort are not fit for any country; nor can even a good sort if in bad condition go any where. I will now," continued I, "give you my candid opinion of your stud, and also of your stud-groom; and will further, in a few days, send you some general hints on the selection of hunters that you will make such use of as you may think proper; as, however, hunting will very soon commence in earnest, you have no time to lose in your purchasing; but," continued I, "it would be perfectly useless in me, or a more competent person, to attempt giving you either advice or assistance, either in the purchasing or management of hunters, so long as you retain your present head of stable affairs in your service."

"Can you give me any reason why I should discharge him?" said my friend, evidently adhering to the idea that the *soi-disant* stable counseller of several noblemen could, like crowned heads, "do no wrong," and, moreover, ought no more to be touched than "the Lord's anointed."

"I think I can," said I, "give several, or I should not have even hinted at a step that I perceive you hold to be of momentous importance. In the first place, then, he knows nothing of his business,—that the condition of your horses shows, who you say have been two months in his hands; in the next place, he is too great a fool to learn, or he would know better by this time; thirdly, he is too great a puppy to be taught, that his general demeanour shows: and, fourthly, he is too impertinent to be borne with as a servant, and that his conduct this morning has shown. If these are not reasons enough for his dismissal, your forbearance and conscience equal in vulcanised india-rubber properties, that of a Prime Minister in his selection and retention of servants of government having strong parliamentary interest."

"What would you advise me to do?" said my friend, "for I really begin to think you are right."

"Personally," said I, "I always make short work of it both with horses and servants, when I find either absolutely burdens. My advice is, send

for your delectable stud-groom, give him a month's wages, pay his way back to where he came from, give him a couple of sovereigns extra to soften his prompt dismissal, and start him by the first conveyance in the morning: you can give as a reason for dismissing him that you intend to take charge of your horses yourself."

This was done, Mr. Forester looking daggers and hatchets at me.

"Being gone," said I, "I am a man again: and now permit me to tell you that though a really intelligent, respectful, and respectable stud-groom is a most valuable appendage to a stud of twenty hunters, to keep one for five is quite out of the question. Make the groom who has charge of your hacks, your head, but not stud groom: this will save you a couple of hundred a year at least, by ridding you of Mr. Forester's expenses, and will perhaps save twice as much by your horses being in proper form when you want them. And now I will, as you desire, give my opinion of the stud.

"The first horse I looked at, if he is not a regular impostor as to looks, is one I should say could go in any country: I consider him in shape and make as perfect as any man can reasonably expect to find a horse; he is, I should say, the very precise size a hunter for general hunting should be. Fifteen three, yet short on his legs,

covering a great deal of ground, and standing well on it: his very head looks a good horse, and his great muscle must make him a strong one: while his length of haunch to his hock, and fine thighs, ought at least to make him a very fast one; his fore-legs are just such as every horse's should be, unless wanted for showy action; he has large long arms, great bony knees, short in his cannon bone, and the back sinew running straight and free down the back of the leg: in short, to quote a favourite phrase of Tom Smart's, 'I consider him quit a nice un.'"

"I am happy," said my friend, "you seem so pleased with Jerry; but let me ask what you meant by the formation of his legs being quite such as you should select unless showy action was wanted?"

"I will explain this," said I. "Of course you are quite aware that showy and *good* action bear very little affinity to each other; fine action is a term often used, but I do not consider even this literally designates good action: it implies a bordering more on show than use, safety, or speed, in any pace. But to return to the formation of legs: those of the *manège* horse, charger, or harness horse, should of course be good, so far as to indicate safety, and an absence of any thing likely to produce cutting or breaking down; but you will rarely find the leg formed for speed one that occa-

sions, or indeed admits of, very high, showy action; horses possessing such action will generally be found to be somewhat small in the general size of the knee, a little tied in under it, and very long in the cannon bone. The shorter the fore-arm is the higher the action will mostly be, and indeed will *always* appear to be; for when a limb thus formed is lifted up, the knee is absolutely higher from the ground than the one would be where the arm is long, and the remainder of the leg short. I know of no speedy animals that, take them as a genus, have high grand action: nor do I know of any of the speedy sort that are not short from the knee down: this accounts for why I really would, as a general rule, look for such formed legs in a horse for show, as I should at once reject in the one for hunting purposes or general use.

"But to return," said I, "to your horse Jerry: I suspect from his condition he has not been long under the care of your late stud-groom."

My friend allowed he had only purchased him a week before I saw him, and had got him out of a hunting stud sold at Tattersall's.

"Pray," said I, "did you select this horse on your own judgment! for if so, pray accept my compliments upon it."

"Why, no," said my friend, "I did not. I happened to meet a friend at Tattersall's, who was talking to Mr. ——, who hunts with the

Quorn hounds: he was kind enough to look at the stud on sale for me, and I bought this horse on his selection."

"Then," said I, "you bought him on the judgment of one who knows a nice horse as a hunter as well as any man living, and, what is more, can ride him as well.

"I am sorry that in going through your horses, I must alter my tone a good deal, if I give you a candid opinion. Now for the grey, that comes next. This horse, I should say, might be own brother to the one that I saw you on in the summer; he has, however, better legs; but there is more glare and gaudiness about him than bespeaks a hunter; he looks unfurnished without a shell bridle and holsters on him."

"I did buy him of an officer," said my friend.

"Well," said I, "under certain circumstances, this is all very well. If, for instance, you bought him of a young cornet, want of money for some proposed spree, want of judgment, or having too many, might occasion the horse being sold; so here you might be safe enough: but if you bought him of a man who has been twenty years in the army, and is a hunting man, the horse being now six years old, depend on it, has seen hounds; and I should have some little misgivings as regards the quarters you got him from. However, the horse is young, is in fair condition, and there is a

possibility of his turning out a fair horse, though any thing like first rate I will promise him never to be. It is true horses do, as they figuratively say, 'go in all shapes,' many with very queer shapes; but then they are, at the same time, going ones: but take this advice as a guide in purchasing,—Never buy an untried horse that has not strong indications of going in him, and even then you must expect to be sometimes much disappointed.

'So pass we on: I only mean
To show the reed on which you lean,
Trusting to go a clipping day,
On nag like yonder gaudy grey;
Who, if my judgment tells aright,
Will never keep the field in sight,
Unless within the covert's bound
The game is chopped by skirting hound.'

"Pray," said I, "may I, by way of information on a subject in which I own myself quite astray, inquire for what earthly purpose the brown next the grey is intended?"

"Now, really," said my friend, "you are too bad. Why, that horse has run and won two or three steeple-chases."

"And a very proper chase for him to run," said I, "if a legitimate one, for in that case the steeple would wait for him; but knowing a fox would not, his owners, who I presume have been

many, probably never tried him in such pursuit. If, however, he really has won more than once, I can account for it. He was run in some selling stake against some lot of valuable animals entered at twenty pound. Win or lose, it was found nobody would take him, so he was started again in the hope of, as the throw at the prize-men say, 'better luck next time;' but finding it all in vain, another dodge has been tried, and it seems has succeeded. I should almost be tempted to say," added I, "that you were accommodated with this lath and plaster steeple-chaser in the neighbourhood of Oxford Street."

"You really are quite right," said my friend; "I did get him in that neighbourhood: but how did you surmise this?"

"Merely at random," said I; "but really thinking as I do, that you have found one of the veriest wretches I ever saw, I turned over in my mind, where you could have got him, and thinking of this locality, I said with Romeo, 'Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.'"

"I assure you," said my friend, "the person I bought him of, to quote a term he used, said 'Bricklayer' was as good a horse as ever he pulled out to sell."

"Pray," said I, "did he add he was as good a horse as ever was 'pulled in' to lose, for if so you have got a trump card."

"No, he did not," replied my companion; "but what do you mean by 'pulling in?'"

"Oh," said I, "it is only a little droll manœuvre sometimes resorted to in a race, or steeple-chase. I added the 'in:' pulled is quite enough among the initiated. The 'in,' as we used to say at school, is 'understood.' However," continued I, "we shall see the nags out to-morrow; it is possible I may have formed a hasty judgment of their qualifications."

"Now," said my friend, "how do you like the next, the bay mare; she is also a steeple-chaser, and has won carrying eleven stone, small as she is; so as I only ride twelve, if she can carry eleven in a steeple-chase, surely she can carry a stone more merely hunting."

"You jump at conclusions, my dear fellow," said I, "as quickly as I am ready to believe the little mare does her fences. I really think her a very wiry good-looking little animal, and quite give her credit for powers that her mere size does not indicate; but I allow I should not have bought her for a hunter. Fifteen hands, if you get a wonder, will go in some countries as well, nay better, than sixteen; but it should be a particular country, and the fences should not be very formidable. But you must permit me to tell you I consider you in error in supposing, because a horse can carry a given weight in a steeple-chase,

that it follows he can carry more with hounds. I am quite aware that in racing a little addition of weight has far greater effect than it has in hunting; but this arises from two causes: first, horses are usually more on a par with each other (or are made so, if handicapped) in a race than are a field of hunters; so if horses are or are made pretty equal in pretensions, any additional weight then put on any of them must tell; a little more would make the thing certain. The other reason why weight tells so awfully in the race-horse is, that from the pace he is so much more extended than the hunter that where a few pounds would perhaps make no difference to the latter, going so much more within himself, each pound is sensibly felt by the race-horse, extended as he is to the utmost stretch his anatomy is capable of."

"Does not this seem in favour of my little steeple-chase mare carrying me as a hunter?" inquired her owner.

"Doubtless, to a certain degree it does; but pray observe, I did not say she would *not* carry you, for where I see good shape and make, I never attempt to give any decided opinion as to what weight of a reasonable kind such a horse can carry, and I should still less attempt to do so where I have not seen the style of the animal's going, on which so much of the capability of

carrying weight depends. I think I merely said that I considered fifteen hands under the size I should like for a hunter; but to answer your question. The hunter can with hounds carry a far greater weight than the race-horse can run under, that is, can race under; for instance, we call ten stone high weight in racing, but very light as a hunting rider; and though seven pounds added to the ten stone would perhaps, in figurative language, stop the race-horse as a racer and among race-horses, he would very likely carry thirteen, and beat the ordinary run of horses we often see with hounds, though they only carried the ten stone seven; but what might prevent the same horse doing anything under thirteen stone or less with hounds, is this: the great speed of a race-horse enables him to outpace other horses, though he may be overweighted; and his blood enables him to make almost supernatural exertions; but it must be borne in mind that his exertions under any weight only last from two to five minutes in ordinary cases, and not more than nine or ten in any. The exertion of the steeple-chase horse seldom exceeds fifteen, generally less; but we must also bear in mind the hunter has to sustain his load for more hours by far than the race-horse does minutes, and on an average half as many hours as the steeple-chaser is asked to carry his minutes; therefore, though

exertion that may be called beyond the strength of the animal may last for a brief period, and even then excites our surprise and admiration, he cannot go on with it. You say your mare, small as she is, has won under eleven stone; but you must know how she came in before you can at all decide as to the effect weight has on her. We will say a man accepts in a handicap at a given weight for a certain distance; he probably knows that his horse can just last this distance, but at the same time knows that under the specified weight all the steel, whipcord, or any other cruelty could not get the animal along another half-mile in a gallop. If he can last the prescribed distance about as well as the rest, and, from being severely punished, can just win, his end is answered; the distress of the horse, though he knows him to be as good as gold, weighs little with the majority of the owners of steeple-chase horses, unless the life of the animal is in danger; nor is that considered much if it happens with a horse of little value, and the take up is a good one. Now-a-days we see horses entered at twenty pounds; so such a horse need not expect much mercy: if he did he would be deceived, for he would be cut into mince-meat if it could make him win, and it answered the interest of the owner that it should be done: at least it is so with many owners of such horses.

"You see, therefore, my friend, that, good as your mare may be, if she won going four miles under eleven stone, and had then little or nothing left in her, the chance of her carrying twelve with hounds is not a flattering one; for if you hunt in a fast country, you will frequently get a burst very little inferior as to pace to a steeple-chase. After the three or four miles of a steeple-chase, distressed or not, the horse is clothed up and led home. After a burst of the same distance with hounds, his work is only, comparatively speaking, begun: thus, though your mare, after going four miles of country in a steeple-chase, most probably (as a winner always does) called forth the plaudits of the spectators, and was followed, praised, and admired as a nonpareil, had you ridden her a little over the same distance in a fast run, she would most likely have shown herself to be in a state that would cause her to be set down as not worth a halfpenny. Of course, I do not mean to say it necessarily follows that such would be the case; what I say is merely to guard you against being deceived by the supposition, that a horse that can win a steeple-chase must be a good hunter. The chances are, I grant, in his favour that he is a good horse; but it is, at the same time, quite possible that after a certain distance, which is, in racing term, 'his length,' he may be one of the veriest curs and brutes living; but we

will pass no decided opinion on either of your nags till to-morrow.

"We have now only one left; may I ask where you got that black mountain of flesh in the last stall?"

"Why," said my friend, "is he not a fine horse?"

"He certainly is a fine large animal," replied I; "but until he is relieved of about a ton of that superabundant flesh, one can form about as correct a judgment of his anatomy as of that of a flea in a feather bed: I fear he is too fat to be good. Pray how long have you had him?"

"I bought him," said my friend, "last May out of a stud."

"And we are now in September," said I, "so this movable mass of blubber has been under Mr. Forester's care four months."

"It is quite true," said my friend; "but, as you know, I have not been much here, so I left the horses to him."

"And he left them to themselves," replied I, "if one may judge of their condition, with the exception of the first bay, who, luckily for himself and you, is a late purchase."

"I told Forester," replied my friend, "I thought the black horse by far too gross; but he said he always liked to see horses 'with a good bit on them' before they began their training."

"A very training expression, and a trainer's usual opinion," said I, "and quite correct, particularly as regards two years' old; but I am not aware that it is quite according to training rules to leave a mass of soft flesh on colt, filly, or horse, to be got off in about a month, by which time your horses ought to be quite fit to go. Why, my friend, do what you will with that horse, he will not be fit to go with hounds till after Christmas: pray, was he as fat when you got him?"

"Very nearly," said my friend.

"Then," said I, "depend on it he is good for nothing, or a lame one; he has been tried and found the one or the other, or both, so has been suffered to be idle, and thus got in his present state of fat. It is quite true, that hunters sold some weeks after the hunting season have usually got fresh in themselves; and a dose of physic, alteratives, carrots, mashes, warm water, stimulants, bandages, and gentle exercise, judiciously administered, brings their constitution and legs into saleable form; but why did you select a horse that you must have judged had not been in work of any sort?"

"Why, to own the truth," said my friend, "I saw a good many dealers about this horse in particular; so I thought if he was cheap at the price they offered, he could not be dear to me at a

trifle more; and from his size, and way of going, I thought he would turn out a fine horse."

"That he had been turned out of the hunting stable," said I, "is quite clear; and now I will tell you why the dealers were (in dealers' phrase) 'sweet upon him:' he is young, fresh on his legs, you say goes well, and is a commanding size; this is enough for a London dealer. The other horses were probably aged, and some stale horses, yet went no doubt at prices that, under such circumstances, would not suit dealers unless they bought by commission. Now, what did you give for him?"

"Seventy-six guineas," replied my friend.

"And, doubtless," said I, "many or some of the others, perhaps blemished, fetched the same sum, and a hundred added to it. Judging, from your not contradicting this, that it was so, how could you expect that a fine unblemished six years' old horse, with good action, would have been let go at less than half the money if he had been found good for anything as a hunter, or even promising to become so?"

"Why, I thought ——"

"Pardon me," said I, interrupting him, "you did not think,—an omission that often lets people in for very unlikely nags; however, at the price, the black can do you very little harm, except the oats he has consumed; and if his condition shows

you the necessity of investigating the qualifications of your grooms in future, he will have done you a great deal of good, and, depend on it, the only good he is likely to do you; so," said I, extending my hand, "good night."

Breakfast over the next morning, we "paraded" the stud, and, at my friend's request, I accepted the temporary honour of being rough rider to the establishment.

First came the bay, looking just as a horse should look; cheerful, cool, and collected; his firm step, fine shaped head, large intelligent eye, and well-defined muscular form, all indicating being able and willing to do "all that may become a horse." I mounted. There is something in the feel of some horses that at once tells a man they are such as he could ride in comfort on; that is, feel at home upon, or not. Half a dozen steps satisfied me I was on such a nag as it is a treat to ride. His gallop was what a hunter's should be, light, quick, and determined: his fine gaskins and strong loins brought his hind legs under him with a sweep that showed it was fortunate for his fore ones that he put them well forwards. I put him at a flight of hurdles; these he went at coolly enough to show he held them as a trifling affair, yet free enough to show he meant neither swerve nor baulk, and took them like a greyhound when not excited. The next

fence was a widish but not deep ditch, a fair safe bank, and an evidently rotten dead hedge on its top. Jerry gave a light spring to its crown, making the old hedge crack again, and coolly, with a second jump, landed in the next field. I wanted no further proof that Jerry knew his business; he came over back just as scientifically.

"Well," said my friend, on my coming up to him, "now for a sentence on Jerry."

"If," said I, "you find him a game horse, which I do not at all doubt he is, never part with him. I am quite sure he can go in any country, and there is not one in a hundred that can go as he can, even if you picked one for them; depend upon it, 'he knows all about it:' and now for 'Gaudy.'"

"Lancer, if you please," said my friend, laughing.

"Lancet would be a more appropriate name, I think," said I, "for I suspect it is a little article quite likely to be wanted if you succeed in getting him through a burst."

"Well," said I, on seeing the grey, "he certainly is a very fine horse; it is just possible he may be a hunter, or to be made so; but I never saw one like him a *good* one. He has no determinate going points, and no indication of wear and tear properties about him; but *nous verrons*."

The grey was pleasant, and a grand horse to sit upon, a fine mouth, and his walk capital; but the moment I put him in a trot the up-knee action made me say, "Oh my prophetic soul! if you gallop like a hunter I'll eat you;" so it was: his gallop was just what it should be at a review, but anything but what it should be at "a fixture." "Now," said I, "hunter or not, a hurdle is, as Sterne says, 'No great matter.'" Jerry had not topped it a bit better than did the grey. "Come," says I, "you are at home at this game at least; now for a bit of fencing." I put at the afore-mentioned fence, leisurely I allow, expecting him to take it "without hurry or care:" it was, however, "no go;" he came round on a pivot. "Humph! you want a little more powder for a point-blank shot, I suppose," thought I. I gave him a rattler up to it next time: he obliqued to the right and to the left, but a taste of the ash above the bit kept him straight till, coming to the ditch, he bolted into it and ran along its bottom. "I have had enough of you," said I; "if you belonged to me I should teach you better manners, but I have had too many falls to seek one for your instruction." He took the hurdle beautifully as before, going back. So much for school practice only.

"Well," said my friend, "what account of the grey?"

"Oh," said I, "a beggarly account of unjumpt fences, or a fence rather, for I tried but one, and that did not suit his taste; so we have toddled gently back, perfect good friends, to pay our respects to you."

"So," said my friend, laughing, "you allow the schoolmaster was beat?"

"I allow much more; I own him to have cowardly given in without in any urgent way making battle: but," said I, "recollect I had 'no *spur* to prick the side of my intent' (or rather horse) in the first place; in the second, I have seen too much to let 'vaulting ambition' have much weight with me; but bet me a few dozen of your capital old port on the event, and the grey and I will enter the lists against each other, and then 'D—— be he who first cries Hold, enough.' Your grey," continued I, "is, emblematically speaking, one of those 'few fine young men' we see advertised for, and then see as recruits, — a fine fellow, but wants a deuced deal of drilling, and this is not 'in my vocation, Hal.' At all events, he is worth a trial, and if, as I suspect, he never makes a hunter, turn him over to the phaeton: he will, happy fellow! be sure to find favour in the ladies' eyes, and if any portion of that is transferred to you, his worth will be beyond that of an entire stud more suited to my humbler pursuits and deserts."

Now for the steeple-chaser: "Certainly," said I, on seeing him, "thou art not a 'vision of health,' and certainly look uncommonly like what I should conceive to be a 'goblin' (something); my yesterday's glance at your bargain did not influence me much in his favour, but, positively, now seeing him out, I never beheld a greater wretch in my life. He is like one of the Flats in a theatre, with about as much substance, the difference being, they represent something worth looking at, which he certainly does not: as to any racing properties, we will not disgrace the turf by thinking of them. He is too tall for a hack, no substance for a hunter, no action or hocks for a charger, or harness; is too weak for a cart, and is the wrong colour for a hearse; however, as I suppose he has carried somebody, he will me."

Mounted, I found him just what such over-topped horses often are, like a hurdle between one's legs, and affording about as steady a seat to the bestrider. I should guess the dimensions of the famed Bricklayer to have been about five feet six high, by thirteen inches wide. His mouth seemed good, but having got him into a gallop, and bringing him in front of the hurdles, he rushed at them, setting hands, arms, and bridle at defiance. His stride was tremendous, and in taking the hurdles he would have cleared an ordinary river. "Better than baulking," thinks I,

"at any rate." I steadied him as well as his mouth would allow in going to the fence, but on nearing it he gave another of his mad rushes, and I made up my mind for a purl. Stopping him was out of the question; he took off many feet before he came to it, took it all in his swing, but hit the bank, or hedge, or something so hard with his hind legs, that he all but came on his head on the other side. I stopped him, and turning towards home, I walked the gentleman up to a gate, dismounted, and ingloriously led him through, ditto the hurdles, and coming up to my friend I delivered the Bricklayer into his hands, observing that finding him so valuable an animal, I wished to ease myself of the great responsibility of the charge.

My friend, who had at a distance seen what had been going on, laughed most mischievously, saying, "He seems a little wild, does he not, in leaping?"

"It is a great pity," said I, "that he was not altogether so wild as never to have been tamed. Whether he may be good as a steeple-chaser or not, it is impossible for me to say, though I certainly do venture to say he could last but for a very short distance unless he wonderfully altered his manners after going a bit; however, allow me to remind you, that when men ride such brutes in a steeple-chase, they are well paid for it, and

well they earn their money; but when gentlemen ride hunting they pay, but are not paid for it; so they expect to be carried pleasantly, and at least moderately safely. Pray, have you ever mounted your crack?" My friend allowed he never had.

"Then," said I, "you have a great treat in store. I wish you a pleasant ride and many of them; let me, however, tell you, if you attempt to ride the brute with hounds, he will break your neck. Such ungovernable rushing horses will sometimes go for a time without a fall, but their great fault is that, not having temper to learn to husband their powers by taking their fences judiciously and coolly, when at all exhausted, so as not to be able to clear them in their usual way, they come down headlong, and not unfrequently 'cur it,' and do not attempt to rise at anything. I know of few cases in which a man would probably deceive himself more in getting together a stud than by attempting to select them from steeple-chase horses. The best attributes of the best of them, which is racing finishing power at the ending post, while it raises them to a monstrous price for steeple-chasing purposes, would be but a secondary qualification in a hunter."

The little steeple-chasing mare next came out, and a nice little animal she was, and had all the look of a good one, but at the same time had that frightened appearance about her that we often see

in race-horses that have been overmarked and overmatched in their racing career. She was stale on her legs, and, like the last, looked stale in condition. On my inquiring the cause, I found that the ci-devant stud-groom, guessing that both these horses had been highly fed and strongly worked, had allowed them to remain idle since he had the care of them, thinking by such means to get them fresh, and had been giving beans in addition to oats as a means of getting them more in flesh: the consequence was, as it would ever be in such cases, their skin stuck to them as dry and tight as the covering of a trunk, and had no more gloss on it than a horsehair nose-bag.

On mounting, a few steps showed the failing. She went so awfully unsafe that it would be a service of danger to ride her to meet hounds, and a forlorn hope to ride her home again.

She galloped and fenced beautifully, but leaning on the hand for support, showed she had been accustomed to this from having carried weight quite beyond what her appearance and size seemed calculated for; still it was easy to feel her powers were extraordinary, thus corroborating an opinion I ever maintained, that, figuratively speaking, we never know what a horse can or cannot carry "*till we try*,"—still she was no hunter.

The black I soon disposed of, or, rather, he disposed of himself. He possessed immense

power, rode pleasantly, and, so far as his load of flesh would admit, went well. To carry such men as Mr. Conyers, or even John Ward, riding to see their hounds hunt, and not other persons' horses go, he might have done. I must not allow my friend to be laughed at for buying such a huge mass of obesity; I have seen persons who could not plead his total inexperience in hunters, commit as great errors.

"Finis coronat opus," we have read; but "Equus coronat opus" is a new reading, though appropriate in allusion. I put my fat friend into a gallop, and at the hurdles over he went, trying their strength with his hind legs, meaning perhaps to act upon this in case he came back, to save unnecessary exertion. Guessing at my customer's propensity, I roused him as far as I could before nearing the fence, and giving him a lift, he got his fore parts well up and half over; but, instead of bringing his hind ones up also to good footing, they slid back, and there he hung on the crown of the bank, like the golden fleece. I got off; and I suppose he found the thorns a little unpleasant as a stomach comforter, for he rolled about like a ship in a short sea, and succeeded in sliding back into the ditch. My friend and his servant coming up, we got him out and sent him in.

"Pray," said I, "am I to understand that you

really bought these horses without riding them, and have not ridden them since?"

"Why," said my friend, "the bay horse I bought at Tattersall's; I had no opportunity of riding, but have done so since I came down: the grey I rode when in London: and the black I rode an airing two days ago, and liked him very well. The other two I have not rode, as Forester said he wished them to rest."

"The chances are," said I, "they would have gone to their long rest from inflammation and fever if he had stayed with you much longer. Why," said I, "if the man had known anything he must have been aware that horses not long out of severe training, as these were when he took to them, must have been accustomed to high feed, strong work, and plenty of air; shutting them up in a hot stable, giving them little or no exercise, no air, and stuffing them with beans, would not make them throw up muscle or even flesh: sound flesh must be the result of sound health. To keep horses treated as these have been in good health, a couple of gentle doses of physic were wanting, cooling alteratives to loosen and moisten their skins, mashes, carrots, plenty of fresh air, and gentle exercise. I strongly suspect your late 'governor;' for *he* was governor, though no doubt he called *you* so,—so great a gentleman could not own to having a

master, though I hold him to be but a Tea-kettle groom, or his chief source of knowledge has been the livery-yards of London. May I ask," said I, "was Mr. Forester in town when you got accommodated with the celebrated Bricklayer?"

"Come," said my friend, "I may as well out with the truth at once; I bought the horse and mare by his advice."

"And I opine," said I, "they belonged to the identical party who also accommodated you with Mr. Forester."

"Well, then, they did; so now you have all the secret."

"A precious lot you got amongst," said I; "and this, as you are a very young man, induces me to give you my opinion of steeple-racing."

"It would ill become me to promulgate strictures on a business (for that is the proper word) that has become so popular as steeple-racing. Properly arranged, I consider it might be made into a national sport of an advantageous character, as causing extensive circulation of money, encouraging a breed of good horses, and affording a most exhilarating amusement to thousands, and to be carried out without any exhibition of suffering in animals or inhumanity in man, save in the estimation of the over-fastidious, or of such as have no sporting propensities about them.

"If we are to encourage steeple-chasing as a

sport likely to keep up a superior breed of horses, let us adhere to principles and regulations that will do so, and I am quite sure letting in a lot of weedy thorough-breds, at very light weights, will not effect the purpose. Let all great stakes be at fair hunting weight; but of what earthly use is a spindling animal that can only carry nine stone with great exertion for twelve or fourteen minutes? Yet such are now let in with racing weight on them, that at eleven stone seven or twelve stone would have no more chance with such horses as Clinker, Vivian, Paulina, the Nun, Old Cigar, Grimaldi, Moonraker, and others, than if they ran the 'ditch in' against the Flying Dutchman. But to return to your stud.

"It seems that, with all your purchases intended for hunters, making (inluding the Windsor Park horse) six, you really have but one that you can with confidence rely upon as a hunter to carry you: as for the rest,—

"You little thought, when first you drew
A check on Farquharson and Co.,
That Lancer Captain ere should boast
'A sell' at your especial cost:
'Woe worth the time, woe worth the day,'
You lost upon your gaudy grey.
Nor shone your star of luck more bright
When erst you gave a draft at sight
For yonder hasty long-legged brown,
No doubt on whom from 'Rolleston'

You thought in foremost flight to lead,
Relying on his vaunted speed;
But when the Whissendine's in view,
You'll find there's something more to do;
And double rails, with fence between,
Require some practice too, I ween;
While Leicester's fields, though mostly turf,
Soon make the soft ones cry 'enough.'
Nor was your fortune at its flood,
When, tempted by the Memnon blood,
Because the mare contrived to grace
Her brows with laurels in a race,
You bought the Liliputian crack,
To go with twelve stone on her back;
Forgetting weight that may not hurt
For fourteen minutes in a spurt,
Will feel more weighty than at first,
Towards the end of lengthened burst;
For then the spreading fence will 'tell'
That nags when fresh could compass well,
And all the various ills arise
From riding horses under size.
Now, hail thou knight of sable hue!
For, if I hear thy master true,
Sir Hildebrand's the goodly name
Thy deeds will either grace or shame;
But if, when in the trysting-field,
To others you the palm must yield,
Thus much I gage for thee, Sir Knight,
You ne'er will be the first in flight;
But if you should, I hold thy speed
Of small account in hour of need;

And if on sylvan war intent,
Instead of joust, at tournament,
Beshrew me, but I hold the test
Will level soon thy rising crest."

"Who calls that doggrel?" said I, flourishing my stick Paddy-fashion. "By this and that, show me the man who does."

"If you won't endanger my nose," said my friend, laughing, "with that stick of yours, I'll swear there's no comparison between Sir Walter Scott and you."

"By the piper that played before Moses," said I, "the shades of his ancestors would rise and break your nose if you did."

"But," said my friend, "this may be very good fun for you, but what had I best do to get out of ——"

"The outsiders you mean, I suppose," interrupted I.

"No," replied my friend; "unfortunately they are insiders at present."

"Well, then," said I, "I leave you to-morrow; send them up with me by the train."

"Agreed," said my friend. "But what will you do with them? I cannot think of encumbering you with three horses unless I send a servant also."

"Never mind," said I, "they'll get up safe enough, and I will get them out safe enough: they

will then be," said I, laughing, "ex-'train'eous subjects; so you shall not be annoyed by them again."

"Oh, oh!" cried my friend, holding up his hands "puns are always bad enough, but such a pun ——"

"Has," interrupted I, "nothing pun-gent in it, but ——"

"Will you try if a devil'd bone has?" said my host, seeing the tray brought in.

"*Bonâ fide*, I will," replied I.

After cooling the effects of the devil on our palate with some *blanc-mange*, a bit of stilton in first-rate condition just rendered it in proper cue to appreciate the moists of some bottled Scotch ale. The appurtenances of supper disappearing, as in such cases they always should, in accordance with good taste, quickly, cigars were placed before us; Fribourg's old stagers, with a "bunch of materials" fitted for the moment; the hour the modest one of ten. If my ideas are not quite incorrect, I hold such practice and such hours, in the country, as coming near the point of rationality.

"Pray," said my friend, "and I am sure you know I only ask as a guidance for my own measures on any future occasion, may I ask what course you mean to adopt to get rid of my un-

lucky purchases: do you mean to try to make —— take back the two I got of him?"

"I am glad you asked me that particular question," said I, "as it will cause me to give you some bits of my experience, that I feel sure will be of use to you."

There are certain facts and principles of the truth of which it is very easy to convince people; yet in accordance with which, though convinced, they cannot bring themselves to act. One of these is your case, my friend, and nineteen men in twenty, in lieu of acting as you propose doing, at once getting rid of that which does not suit them, shrink from making that which appears a sacrifice, and by so doing make a real one to twice the amount, by acting on a mistaken idea of avoiding any: it matters not what the subject may be, whether a horse or a chest of drawers; and to make the thing clear to all sorts of persons, I will instance the chest of drawers for my present purpose.

An old person has, we will say, such an article, but wishes for a set of another form; these said drawers we will suppose to have been purchased forty years ago: every one knows that furniture of the same class is now to be got for about half the price it was charged in 1810; the drawers then cost (say) 20*l.*, the same are made now for 10*l.*; for that price the person can get a pair of

the form wished for: but then comes the bugbear of the fancied loss to be sustained in the disposal of the original piece of furniture,—only 9*l.* can be got for it. "Here," cries the owner, "is 11*l.* loss." By a little reasoning, however, we convince him that he is quite in error: he gets an article he wishes to have and gets rid of one he does not like, for the mere sacrifice of one pound; the one being as good as the other, though different in form. The owner wisely resolves at the moment to do this, but I would bet long odds that call a month afterwards, there would stand the identical drawers; the recollection of the original price paid would have returned, and thus, sinning against conviction itself, the owner goes on daily grumbling, yet still adhering to his blind policy.

It is just the same in every case and with everything we purchase; if we give fifty per cent. more than it is worth, its value is just fifty per cent. less than we gave: so in selling it we do not make a sacrifice of that sum on the article, but pay thus much for our want of knowledge and prudence.

But to come to horses. It matters not whether the depreciation in their price arises from age, accident, their having turned out badly, or our having given far above their original worth; their value is what, if sold under the most favourable circumstances, is to be got for them. Conse-

quently, the selling out at such price, though it may be loss, is not sacrifice.

This brings me to the particular point where so many persons, really fair judges of horses too, so daily err: they go to a dealer, of whom, in a certain sense, it may be said, as I have heard said of a very fashionable one, "He will not open his mouth under 200*l.* at least." The buyer is asked prices varying from 150*l.* to 200*l.*, till, having taken one at 140*l.*, he begins to think that the minimum price of a horse of any promise. He does not, for some reason, like his purchase; shows him to a friend, who, if conversant in such matters, most probably tells him he considers his purchase worth one half the price given, and very probably is able to say, "I can show you two or three at that price better horses, and that would suit you better." Now, suppose the purchaser sold his horse at 70*l.*, and took the other at the same price; he would fancy he had made a sacrifice of 70*l.*, whereas in point of fact he made no sacrifice at all; he got the value of his horse, though not Mr. ——'s price. Most likely, instead of this, he returns to the original seller, gives 30*l.* or 40*l.* to boot, and gets another horse that perhaps he does not like, or likes better. "Well," he says, "this is better than sacrificing 70*l.* by selling my first horse; if I have given more money, I have got a horse worth more." These ifs are very de-

ceptive, the chances are he has not got a better horse, and if he has, he has only increased his actual eventual loss; for, though he gave 40*l.* more, he may hold himself lucky if the horse is 20*l.* better than the last, so he only expended a larger sum on equally disadvantageous terms.

Men going on in this way deceive themselves in another particular; they fancy they are always riding on hundred and fifty hunters, when in reality they are riding horses that would be held by good judges, and men who really ride fine horses, as only fit to carry servants. Possibly, after a time, they may find this to be the case: they change on and on till after from first to last they have by dribblets paid about 500*l.* for each nag they possess, possibly, but not probably, they do at last get a nice horse worth a third of the 500*l.* It is the worst and the most unsatisfactory way in which a man can go on in getting hunters, or indeed any description of animal of the horse kind.

"Now," continued I, "to go to the person you bought your two horses of would be a very young proceeding indeed. In the first place, what could I say? You took two horses of him quite unfit for your purpose; the error lay with you. I have no reason to doubt their being, as represented, very fair steeple-chasers among their own class of horses; no doubt he would take them in exchange:

but if he did, if he has anything good in his hands, he would want twice its worth; so, as I have shown you any exchange with the same person would only make bad worse, a proper advertisement, and Tattersall's, is the only mode of getting off such nags: they will be known by their names, and their true value as well known, that they will bring and no more."

CHAP. IV.

Hints on purchasing Hunters. — Hunters best adapted for Yorkshire;—for Leicestershire;—for Bedfordshire;—for the Country round London;—for open Countries. — Qualities of a Hunting-Rider.

After selling the three horses, I sent my friend their produce, and with it the following hints on

PURCHASING HUNTERS.

The primary subject to be considered is, the state of the purse of the purchaser; the second, the country he intends principally to hunt in; and, thirdly, the kind of rider he is, both as regards his proficiency and predilections. If money is no object, a thoroughly made horse is the best for him to buy, — one proved not only to be good, and to know his business, but to do it in a style that it should be done by a gentleman's horse. To attempt to name even the probable price of such a horse would only mislead, as it would all depend upon the circumstances of where, and of whom, he was purchased. If a man purchases from a gentleman, who is so in the comprehensive

sense of the word, that is, embracing all the fine qualities that constitute the character, he has the certainty on his side of not being willingly deceived by the seller. He may, however, be inadvertently most woefully deceived in his purchase, both on the score of goodness and pleasantry in the animal; for neither are definite terms, both depending on what a particular person calls good or pleasant. In such a case, therefore, a purchaser should ascertain how far his own ideas and those of the seller correspond: if they do, the purchase will, as far as human foresight goes, be sure to turn out a satisfactory one, so far as qualifications and sufficient soundness go. In point of price, however, a young purchaser may, though buying under all these advantages, be most comfortably victimised: not willingly, on the part of the seller, but from his determination not to sell his horse under a particular price. This may arise from a very defensible resolve, that a strong price shall alone induce him to part from that which affords him gratification, or from really conceiving the animal to be quite worth the price he demands, in either of which circumstances the purchaser will, in most cases, find he has paid a somewhat strong price for his horse: if he gets what he wishes, the gratification of our wishes seldom being to be had at their just value, he has no great cause to complain.

A man situated as I have supposed one, luckily for him, to be, namely, having no occasion to baulk his wishes from a regard to price, may make himself moderately secure in getting a truly valuable hunter out of a stud on sale at Tattersall's. But he must bear in mind that in purchasing there, unless he personally knows the horses, or some one who does, he most positively, in the full sense of the term, buys a "pig in a poke:" his only plan, if he intends purchasing there, is to find some one in whose judgment and integrity he can rely, who has seen all the stud in their work during the season, and if he knows the kind of horse that will suit the purchaser he will point him out; and, probably, what is wanted will be got. But here the price must not be an object; for, if the horse is a desirable one, there will be sure to be plenty of men with long purses who can afford to treat themselves to that for which they have a fancy, not at the price they consider the horse to be worth as a marketable commodity, but at a price they choose to give rather than lose that they wish for: the same horse, if not liked by the purchaser, though bought at four hundred, if sent back and resold a month afterwards, would very probably not realise half the money: the absolute value of a hunter can, therefore, never be ascertained.

We will now look at the affair in a different

point of view, and will call in the aid of the immortal Dick Christian to help us. He once came from Leicestershire commissioned by Lord —— to buy a horse I had: he was by Thunderbolt out of Delta, by Delpini, — well-bred enough; in short, he had been named for a Derby. While with me, he had been used as a stud-horse, so I hinted I feared his lordship would find him somewhat noisy among a crowd of horses: "Oh," said Dick, "my lord loves a bit of music." I sold him the horse, and, I regret to say, I afterwards learned that, though the best-tempered animal in creation, simply because he knuckered more than his lordship liked when among horses, he made the poor animal undergo an operation to prevent it, though then thirteen years old. I would not have sold him, at any price, had I anticipated such a result.

Now, I should say, Christian was just the kind of man to help a gentleman to a hunter: no man could hunt in Leicestershire without being known by him, and the particular sort of horse suited to every man hunting there. He always knew the real value of every horse known there, — first, second, or third class; and supposing a hunter not to suit Leicestershire, Christian could always help a man to a hunter for other countries: buying by his recommendation, no one would be de-

ceived by ignorance, or, in justice let it be said, by roguery either.

It is true that Dick Christians, all faults, virtues, and peculiarities considered, are only met with perhaps two or three times in a century, still there are men of a similar cast who are, I should say, the very best and safest to apply to for a hunter: they really know what is fit for a man, and it is not all who know what is fit for themselves. To such men, as the best of all modes, I recommend men young in the field to apply to make up their stud, large or small.

But supposing a buyer determined to purchase for himself (though strongly recommending him not to do so unless he has experience in such matters), I will give him such hints as I trust may be useful to him.

After expenditure, the next point for consideration is country, involving, as it does, the sort of horse that ought to be purchased as the best adapted to go over it.

Having at times hunted with more than a dozen different packs of fox-hounds, I have of course seen a variety of countries, each, in some respects, differing from the other, but not all so much so as to require a different description of hunter to get over them. I will therefore only instance four; these being perfectly distinct in

their features, and each requiring quite a distinct kind of horse to suit them.

We will first go the farthest a-field, and will mention Yorkshire, that is, the Holderness part of it.

This country requires horses as near thoroughbred as they can be got. Why they should be so is this: it is chiefly a ploughed country, not hilly, but particularly heavy; and as the scent generally is good, though hounds may not fly over it as they do over the grass land of Leicestershire, the goodness of the scent renders the pace very fast; and in such a country, so awfully severe on horses, low bred ones cannot live over it; the fences, though not intricate, or varying much in nature, are regular yawners. Of the ditches it may fairly be said that they, as some road-side houses profess to do, afford ample "accommodation for man and horse." Horses, therefore, as well as men, require determined courage to face them: with these exhausters, and such a country, nothing but blood can cope. But what constitutes the difficulty of getting horses fit to go there is, blood alone will not do, nor will strength without blood; in short, if I was asked the precise sort of horses to be looked for, I should say, a very large powerful race-horse who might not have speed enough for the turf.

Coming nearer home we will take Leicester-

shire: here the same sort of horse would do well also; but we could, in a general way, improve him, by taking a slice off the sheer strength, and adding it to the speed; for though at times parts of this country ride very heavy, it is by no means as universally so as the Holderness. Hounds can get over turf in any state faster than ploughed land; so the pace is faster here, though not more severe perhaps on the horse than the other. All men will allow the Leicestershire fences are big enough to please any one, and, if they would allow the truth, too big to please the generality of persons; but here, though more varied, they are not, one and all and every one, a regular tilter, and horses want very often the "in and out clever" way of doing the thing, particularly when a little blown: in fact, the Leicestershire hunter should be a race-horse that can "jump a bit;" though, of course, he need not be anything like a first-rater as a race-horse.

We will now look at Bedfordshire. Here we only want a fair proportion of blood and moderate speed; but in fencing, a horse should, in slang phrase, be up to every dodge in this craft; in short, always have "a leg to spare," for he will meet with all sorts of obstacles in the shape of fences: he may "fly a fence" into a field, and must then, perhaps, creep through or over one to get out; in fact, no country makes horses more

handy than Bedfordshire. The hounds are fast enough, but where they are constantly impeded by fences, the same sort of streaming goer is not wanted for a hunter as in countries with large enclosures, and often all but racing ground. But if a man wants a perfect made hunter, let him get one esteemed as such with the Oakley, and he may rest assured he will get a very clever animal.

We now come close to London, and will speak of Surrey, taking the country formerly hunted by Colonel Jolliffe. Here, and I mean it in no disrespect to any pack who hunt it, or field who patronise it, for I have had many most delightful days in it — I should never think of riding anything beyond a fifty pound hack; he will carry you just as well from a meet at Chipstead as would Osbaldiston's never-to-be-forgot Clasher. High breeding is not required, for foxes, at least I found it so, usually run short; you get a pleasant burst, have then time to collect yourself and your horse; you then get another spin; and, for those who do not ride expressly for fame, a very pleasant hunt was Jolliffe's, not a whit less pleasant from having so courteous, gentlemanly, and pleasant a master as Colonel Jolliffe was. The only reason why I say a fifty pound hack will carry a man is this, the surface rides light and dry, and there is not, figuratively speaking, a fence in the country a good Galloway could not

clear, at least I never found one that such an animal could not; the chief thing wanted is strength on short legs, sound ones, with good feet under them, good strong hind-quarters and loins to get up and down hill, which a horse possessing them will soon learn to do. In fact, here a neat compact horse is wanted; of course the better bred the better he will be, if possessing the qualities mentioned.

I find, though I intended only to mention four particular countries, to work out my subject I must introduce a fifth, namely, the Brighton, or any other open down country.

For such, very highly bred, indeed quite thorough bred, horses are wanted; but here blood does not call for large expenditure in the purchase, for we can dispense with power, at least to a great extent we may do so, for here the extraordinary capabilities in blood in carrying weight shine resplendently; a horse thorough bred, looking like a ten stone nag, will carry twelve with ease to himself. He is on racing ground: true, there are hills, and portentous ones, and a thin weak-loined weed would not do; in fact, where would he? but a neat, symmetrically formed, little true bit of blood will show his quality and hidden powers in a most extraordinary way. The truth is, pace that tells on the low bred, tells nothing with him but the

family he springs from; and let those deny it who will, when put to the test, breed will show itself in man or beast.

Thus much I wrote and sent to my young friend as some guide to him in his selection for his small stud. How far my description of a hunter for a particular country may be correct or not, it is not my province to decide upon; my readers can consult better opinions than I have given, and then use any of mine or not as they may think proper.

But I did more for my friend than giving him advice; for declining, as I always do if I can, to purchase for others, I put him in the hands of a friend of mine, who has not the same objection I have to this sort of commission; and it would be agreed on by all who knew him once, when I give my belief, that the combined forces of Great Britain could not induce him to be guilty of a deception or a falsehood. My young friend had tried buying for himself, had smarted for it, as many others have done; but having done so, he had the good sense, that very few possess, not to try it again: so he gave the friend I mentioned to him *carte blanche* to give what he liked, and buy what he liked; the result of his doing so will be seen in its place.

We have now arrived at the third circumstance, or rather circumstances, to be kept in

mind in purchasing hunters, namely, the qualities of the man who is to ride them.

If we put a thoroughly well-made amenable hunter, with a fine temper and fine mouth, into the possession of a mere dare-devil, unscientific horseman, with bad hands and not the best of tempers, we really do injustice to by far the most to be admired beast. If we give a resolute determined horse, though a good hunter, to a man mild in manner and habits, we do a most unkind act to probably a most kind man. Again, giving a horse who does not perfectly know his business to a man who cannot teach it him, risks the limbs, or perhaps life, of a valuable member of society; and, on the other hand, giving a very large price for a horse because he is easy to ride and is perfectly made, for the use of a man who has health, strength, nerve, and knowledge to make a fine horse into a hunter, is lavishing money for no necessary purpose. If, however, a man with such qualities has large means, but will take no trouble on his hands, by all means indulge him in his idleness or affectation, or both; give five hundred for a made hunter for him, and somebody will benefit by the transaction.

There is, however, a description of rider that the unthinking, uneducated, and illiberal will at once ridicule, and indulge themselves in a coarse laugh at his expense; this is the timid or nervous

one. I grant that, in a general way, I should say such a man is better at home, or in a pony phaeton, than with fox-hounds; yet what should we say if we found, what very possibly might be the case, that he really loved hunting better, and knew more about it and hounds, than ourselves? I can only say that, figuratively speaking, I should take my hat off to such a man as my superior as a sportsman, though I might well know he would not face the commonest gate for 1000*l*. Riding boldly certainly shows determination and courage, but the not doing so by no means is proof of the general *want* of it; there is a peculiar kind of constitutional nerve necessary to make a bold rider, and practice makes such riding habitual; still a man may possess courage of the highest order if called on, that cannot, or at all events does not, show nerve in the chase.

There is not only a good deal, but a great deal, of arbitrary exclusiveness in certain hunts: very aristocratic, very fashionable all this may be; whether it is perfectly in unison with the courteous liberality of gentlemanly demeanour, is not for me to say. The man making his appearance at a meet at Oadby Toll-gate, if it was known he had but two or three hunters, would be held as a nobody, or as one that nobody knows; if he rode merely fairly, was seen watching every hound and the hunting without noticing how others' horses went,

or his own, so long as he could see the working of the hounds, he would be voted a nobody double distilled; but if the somebodies giving such votes spent an after-dinner with the late Lord Darlington, Mr. Musters, and Ward, if the discussion of the merits of hounds and the intricacies of fox-hunting were the subject, the owner of fifteen first flighters might in his turn be thought, as a sportsman, a nobody—lucky if he came off with so mild a cognomen from the last-mentioned of these genuine sportsmen.

CHAP. V.

A Day with the Hounds. — Opening the Campaign. — All fair in War. — Bone versus Blood. — Blood versus Bone. — Characters in the Field. — H. H. doing the Honours.

Shortly after sending the above general ideas of mine to my friend, cub-hunting was over; the regular fixtures were given out; and, as I had proposed, I prepared to have a ride with my friend with hounds, as I before had on the road, and in Hyde Park. I invited him to spend what time he could spare with me, of course giving, as a reason, the pleasure his society would afford me. My motive, however, was this; I thought it better he should show any want of hunting habits in a strange country, than in his own. I engaged a comfortable stable for him with a coach-house for a box at a small inn close by, not having a vacant stall at my own place; sooth to say, I seldom had, live where I would.

He sent down four horses; the bay we have so admired before, the memorable grey, and two my friend had bought for him, both as nice specimens of hunters as could be seen, and, to the credit of my selection of a stud groom from the hack stable, all in tip-top condition. I hardly

knew my old friend the grey; if condition could make him go, he was fit to go for a man's life.

I had returned from hunting, had just doffed the pink and *et ceteras*, and donned shoes, stockings, and that never to be despised friend, a well made but thread-bare evening coat, when my friend drove up. A couple of dozen of oysters I have heard termed a whet to the appetite for dinner; however, one dozen of natives between us, properly qualified, sent us to the stable to await the early fox-hunter's hour of four for something more substantial. The merits and demerits of his and my own nags were discussed: of the latter I need say nothing here; they were at all events good ones to look at, whatever they might be to go.

Over a humble bottle of port the next day's plans were proposed; the fixture was fourteen miles off, and, as my friend's horses had come twenty-five the day they arrived, we agreed a little walk would suit them better than a day's hunting.

"Do you like hare?" said I; "I mean on the table."

"Few things better," said my friend.

"Do you like a bit of coursing?" rejoined I.

"Even better than a bit of hare," replied my guest.

"You shall have a taste of both to-morrow," said I.

"You speak confidently," said my friend; "I suppose your dogs are first-rate."

"So far from it," said I, "I am rated by every man in the country who owns a long dog for keeping mine, to each of which a halter if they are caught out is promised. The truth is, I only course for two purposes; one is literally fun, when I have nothing else to do; the other is when I want a hare or two, which my dogs rarely fail to pick up for me if once they get sight of one; I have three, or, in proper terms, a leash. The fact is, one was given me because he ran cunning, so he was of no use at the meetings, though first-rate as to qualities of speed and stoutness; the second I bought, who soon learned the tricks of his comrade; and the other I begged, to save him from being hanged for the same fault: so in truth they are direct hare murderers; but not professing to be a courser, I bear all their taunts, and no hare escapes my long tails, one of whom, however, had lately very nearly become a short tail, for following my horse to a friend's house, while my back was turned, I caught the gentleman with my dog's tail in one hand and a gardener's knife in the other; so in one moment more my unfortunate dog would have boasted a stump had I not come to the rescue."

The next morning we sallied forth; a man leading my proscribed dogs; I on an old groggy

horse that had been my crack hunter; my friend on a Galloway mare of mine, much under fourteen hands.

"What am I to do," said my friend, "if the hare takes across the fields; will this pony lead over?"

"You need not trouble yourself to lead her," said I; "she will carry you over anything you will meet hereabouts; I put you on her to show what little ones can do; that Galloway, in give and take hurdle races, that is, weight for inches, has beat some very fair full-sized horses; so follow me on my old cripple; if the pony baulks or falls, I'll give her to you."

We found a hare who went off straight for some plantations half a mile off: this was all fair so far, the dogs ran up to her, and now their game began; and theirs in short was, in another sense, a give and take race or course, for one of them always took care to be half a dozen lengths behind the other; so the moment the leading dog turned puss, the other was on her; thus they had scarcely run up to their game before, after a turn or two, she was in one or the other's mouth; and so well did they understand this by-play, that if they once got near a hare, she was booked to a certainty.

"Pray," said my friend, "do you call this fair towards poor puss?"

"It is not certainly fair coursing, but, as to its fairness towards puss, it is at all events as fair as shooting her; and as I never do this, I do take a little liberty with her in the way you see, which gives me a gallop as well as a hare."

"I wish I had not ridden this pony," said my friend as we returned home.

"Why so?" said I.

"Why," said my guest, "it puts me out of conceit with my horses; here is a little animal that, with near twelve stone on her back, has carried me up to greyhounds, bounded over hurdles and fences, as strong under me as if I was a boy; and I have given heavy prices to get what can do no more. Will you sell her?"

"Your discontent," said I, "is uncalled for, but affords me occasion to make a few remarks that may be useful to you. In the first place, I warned you I had put you on the back of an extraordinary animal, by whom you must not judge of such in general; though this you may set down as fact, small horses are no doubt stronger, and indeed better, in proportion to their size than large ones. A fair or good horse, of proper size, can of course do a great deal more than the Galloway you are now on; but certainly not so much more as his increased size would warrant us to expect. I told you, if you recollect, in allusion to your little steeplechase mare, that for short distances weight

does not affect any horse, except a race-horse, so much as may be usually conceived it would. You have found the truth of this to-day, but remember this country, or at least the part we are in, rides sound and light, the fences are not large, and even where they are, they can safely be jumped on and off. If I could insure a whole run to be over such a country, riding as I do, light, I do not believe any hounds could get away from me on the pony: but do not deceive yourself in favour of under-sized horses, good as they may be; for, as Somerville says of small hounds, so may be said of very small horses, 'the puny breed in every furrow swims;' and where large leaps have to be covered at once, we must, as a general rule, have size to do it.

"Some years since, I went to hunt for a few days with a friend, who had another staying with him for the same purpose. This last-mentioned personage was about ten stone in his hunting saddle, and about five feet four in height; he had a couple of thick-set, strong, good-looking horses down there, and having no turf ideas about him, talked a great deal of 'having something under one;' 'blood was all very well, but bone carried the blood.' Agreed that my two horses were very handsome, looked like galloping; allowed, on my begging him to span their legs, that they quite surprised him as to size and firmness of feel,

but he liked bigger bone still, and more flesh to support it. 'I don't like,' said he, using rather to me a new expression, 'these cuts and slashes,' alluding to where the division of muscle on my nags could be seen.

"We went out next day and got a clipper. I on a five year old horse, that I had bought at Newmarket and made a hunter of. My little advocate for bone and flesh went well, I modestly playing second fiddle to him. Twenty minutes was nearly over, not a hound stooping, and scarce a note heard. I saw my little acquaintance had plenty on his hands, both in regard to his horse's head and also to keeping his place: we were now on light ploughed ground, and the country open. Now, said I to myself, for a little fair mischief. My horse, that I had held quite within himself, was only at his three-quarters speed. I laid hold lightly of my curb-rein, got his nose in, and just letting him feel the spurs, he went by my pilot like an express train passing a luggage one. 'What do you say to "the cuts and slashes" now?' said I, as I passed him. I saw the heels go to work; that won't last long with bone and flesh, thought I: luckily for him, just as I got over the crown of the hill, the hounds ran into pug, and up came my friend in a trot, as the huntsman, after a thrilling 'whoo-whoop,' gave a 'Hallo! tear him! tear

him, my boys!' and threw the carcase among the pack.

"A month afterwards my host wrote to me, saying, his friend had sold his horses, bought two thorough breds, never had the stud-book out of his hands, and now took as mistaken an idea regarding blood horses, as he did before of fleshy ones, his new cry being, 'Never mind the bone, that never breaks; one ounce of blood is worth a ton of it.'

"He got into the spindle-shanked sort, but being very light himself, they got along with him.

"It is thus," said I, "people so often get badly carried, from running into extremes. If they get big ones they fancy coach-horses can carry them; and if they fancy blood, they imagine weeds will make hunters; depend on it, neither will do.

"And now," said I, "as to your question of whether I will sell the pony, I have no objection to do so; but I do not see what you want her for; I will not take less than a hundred and fifty for her; she is only five off, and won nearly that sum during the summer, winning five races; but I must let you a little into her history, that you may not attach too much value to Galloways. I believe her (strong as she looks) to be as thoroughbred as Eclipse; her dam was a racing Galloway, by Dr. Syntax out of a little mare, running as a half-bred one; and the one you are on is by

Muley Moloch, so there is not much the matter as to breeding. I bought her for 60*l.* after seeing her beat, evidently from want of condition at the time. You may get one for a fifth of the money, just as good for ordinary purposes; so I strongly recommend your leaving her where she is; and always bear in mind as regards horses, that their value chiefly depends on their being applied to the purposes their peculiar qualities fit them for."

"I wish," said my friend during the evening, "I could persuade you to ride my grey to-morrow; my man tells me he never baulks now as he did when I got him: your account of him will decide me whether to keep him on or not."

"Saddle White Surrey for the field to-morrow," said I, "as you wish it; if we take our line of country and keep among the chalk, grey will I hope do: but if we get into the grazing part of our country, I fear the pasturage will not be to his taste; however, I will take care to leave enough in him to reach home."

We were somewhat early at the fixture, and the hounds were only coming up as we got there. On coming up, the first Whip and Huntsman touched their caps.

"I have brought a friend to see your hounds," said I to the latter.

"Very proud to see the gentleman, sir," said Will.

"That," said I, "is the famous Will ——, one of the best huntsmen living, and a very good-natured fellow to any thing but a fox."

Will took off his cap at this compliment, when my friend with very good tact rode up to him, saying, "I don't know whether you cap with your hounds or not, Huntsman, but a stranger should always suppose you do," putting a sovereign into his hand.

"Now," said I, seeing different men coming towards us, "I will, as far as the time will allow, tell you whom you see. That gentleman who has just come up on his hack, as if his life was at stake as to time, is a rich man and gives liberally; so people are civil to him: he made his fortune in business in London, and has bought a fine place near here: he is one of those fussy mortals who are always in a hurry; he is so in coming, is so while hounds are finding or running, and would be in as great a hurry to get home again, but that he generally so knocks up his horse, that he is fain to get there somehow: he is always doing wrong, riding over hounds, heading back a fox into cover, giving wrong information to the huntsman, who however knows him too well to attend to him; and as for keeping his tongue still, nothing but a twitch could keep it so; he is however, a harmless, good-natured creature in dis-

position, and as he is not much seen after the first burst, no one quarrels with him.

"That gentleman preparing to mount that fine chesnut is a very wealthy distiller and banker at ——, who, though he made small notes for the use of his townsmen and others, does not make small ones of his own importance. He once represented his town in parliament, and always represents a rather pompous, purse-proud personage: he gives long prices for his horses; but they are always fat, each comes out but seldom, as it takes them a fortnight to recover a moderate run; and if any one wished him to risk his neck, they have only to show they are watching him, his wish to show himself off will then make him outdo himself.

"That tall gentlemanly man on the brown in such fine condition is a clergyman, with a good living, and moderate independent property, a perfect sportsman, fine quiet rider, and a perfect gentleman; he keeps two hunters, and hunts twice a week. His horses are first-rate, he steals away quietly with the hounds, and no matter what the country, there he stays; he pays his curate liberally though only availing himself of his services one month in the year; in fact, in the church, drawing-room, or field, he is liked by every one. If you want a pilot, keep your eye on him; but mind, unassuming as he looks, and

really is, he turns his horse's head from nothing practicable."

"Who is that," said my friend, "who has just moved his hat to the clergyman, who has kissed his hand to him in return?"

"That," said I, "is young ——, the journeyman parson; in other words, the curate I alluded to: he and his chief are, as you see, on such terms as reflect great honour on both; each most deservedly esteems the other. Young Roberts, as he is called, though *sotto voce*, 'Bob' by his intimates, with a 120*l.* as his curacy, and 200*l.* a year of his own, a very pretty and amiable wife, and fortunately no family, is as happy a fellow as any in the kingdom. He keeps two horses, each of which goes in his gig, hunts like his master twice a week, is visited by the best society, and his wife and he are always invited and welcome guests at the first houses in the neighbourhood. His gig is his chariot; his lady sports an oiled skin cloak and hood, the dressing-room of the hostess is at her command, and in ten minutes after their arrival they walk into the reception rooms as aristocratically dressed as any there. But to return to the field. Bob never gives above five and twenty as a maximum for his horses; he gets them of the best possible sort and breed: he is light, a beautiful, scientific, and bold rider, with fine hands; and if

his nags have one tolerably sound leg, it is more than they usually boast: he has them in the highest possible condition, and reversing the common practice of men, for the first ten minutes he is never seen, but so soon as he and his cripples get warmed, their breeding tells, and blood from the best stables in England thus sends along legs not often seen in any stable but his own. Towards the close of a run, the rector and curate often have a twist at each other, and Bob is always willing, like the Vicar of Wakefield, to have at 'the head of the Church,' and two better horsemen in good-natured strife never contended for first in.

"Do you see that short, stout-looking man, with three times as much clothes on him as any one else, and those three times too big for him: that is Frank Holloway, a farmer, breeder, hunting and steeple-chase rider, trotting rider and driver, pigeon shooter, master of a nondescript pack of rough and ready dogs, that will hunt any thing, and at times hunt all things. He, is moreover, a wrestler, and has come off victorious in several mills, because they could not give him thrashing enough to stall him off. He is rough rider to the whole country; any reprobate that no one else will mount is sent to Frank Holloway. He has been in every ditch, and has tumbled into or over every fence in the country, and I believe has

not a square inch of his body that has not been black and blue a hundred times. He is, as you see now, on a very fine grey entire horse, who, from being uncommonly handsome and uncommonly good, has been in the hands of every man in the hunt, with all of whom, not only in fencing but in galloping, he has come down headlong, in spite of curbs, gags, chiffneys, and all sorts of bits. Frank has now had him more than a month, rides him in a plain snaffle held quite loose; when he makes a blunder, Frank gives him a —— and a double thonger over the ears, and away they sail again; he has not as yet had a fall from him, and swears he is the safest horse in the world if people would not be afraid of him. This, by the by, I have generally found, that the more freedom we give an unsafe goer, the safer will be his action. What will be the result of Frank's riding the grey I know not, but such is the horse and such the man. I have known, and so have many, some other hard bitten d——s of the same sort. George Gosden one of his Majesty's Yeomen Prickers, was one; and, of a later date, poor Solloway, the steeple-chase rider, was another.

"You see," said I, "another well-known character in this hunt, on the good-looking bay horse. His bridle, saddle, boots, breeches, cravat, all about him could not be in better taste if he was at a meet at Kirby Gate, yet he sports a simple

drab kind of shooting jacket, instead of the pink. That is Mr. or Jack Fearon, one of the crack riders here, and would be the same everywhere. He is a better bred one than one in ten of those out; his father was a private gentleman; Jack was educated at Rugby, but for some cause inherited one thousand instead of twenty, which he expected; he took a small farm here, and also took a wife, as well bred as himself. From a hundred acres he now farms eight hundred; but the slights he underwent in his commencement live fresh in his memory; his doors are shut to those who now would enter them and be his friends. Keeping such far off, he is too proud to wear scarlet, lest it might be thought he was wishing to become one of those who once slighted him. I have the pleasure of the entrée to his house, where everything speaks of the gentleman; he is courteous to all, but holds them at the distance they formerly did him; his only friends are the two parsons we have seen, and the master of the pack, every dog of which he knows as well as the huntsman. Be the country rough or smooth, the drab jacket is among the first. You see three coming up together; they are officers from the barracks, and, as you now see, by the friendly mutual recognition, are friends of Fearon's. He is rather an extraordinary man, and though singularly mild in manners, he is a bold man who

would venture to say an offensive word to Fearon.

"You must see that very tall man on the black; that is a stranger here; Captain Oliver, one of the most gentlemanly men and best riders in his own or any other country; he is a guest at the barracks.

"I conclude you know that short firm-built man on that wicked looking bay mare."

"Indeed I do not," said my friend.

"What," cried I, "not know the Captain; where on earth was you born? You remind me of an old anecdote of the once celebrated Buckhouse. Before gas was in use he was a link-boy at the theatre doors, a vocation now uncalled for. He one evening asked a gentleman for sixpence for lighting his party from their carriage. 'Please, sir, remember Buckey.' — 'Who the deuce is Buckey?' said the gentleman, probably not much used to London characters. 'Why, don't you know Buckey?' said the link-carrier. — 'No, upon my soul, I do not,' replied the other. 'Then you're no gentleman, I'm sure,' said Buckey, looking at him with sovereign contempt. I do not say this of you; but I should almost say, if you do not know the Captain, 'you're no sportsman.' That individual is no other than the celebrated Mr. or Captain Beecher, whose name, conjointly with that of Vivian, will live in the memory of every sportsman while memory lasts.

Some persons may call Beecher now of the old school. This is, however, scarcely the case, for steeple-chasing is all comparatively a *new* school; but new or old we have had none who could ride better, and where head and hands were wanted, few who could ride as well. Beecher has the rare quality of getting all out of a horse that can be got, and that without any of the butchering many riders so unnecessarily make use of. Few men have ridden more successfully than Beecher, and his success was mainly to be attributed to his head: no man living is a better judge of pace and the powers of a horse than he is: he could punish as severely as any man if necessary; but I think I will say he never gave a stroke to a horse but when thorough good judgment told him it would be efficacious; nor did he ever give a severe dig of the spur when, in his phrase, 'a squeeze' would answer the purpose. True his whiskers are not of their pristine hue, but they are as critically arranged as ever, and his spirits are as buoyant. May both last as long as the recollection of his fine riding will, and long after many of those that have sprung up as riders within the last few years will be forgotten!

"But here comes the Master of the hounds, so we will stop our chat, offer our salutations to him, and then attend to our business."

"But," said my friend, "I have no acquaintance with the gentleman."

"I am aware of that," said I; "at this moment we do not move our hats to him as an acquaintance, but in virtue of his situation as master of the pack; a piece of courtesy that no well-bred man omits on like occasions."

Our courtesy returned. "You are on a new horse, I see, Hicover," said the Master, "and a very fine horse he is."

"He is merely one I am trying for a friend, my lord." "Well," said I, to my friend, "that is no fib, and if grey exposes himself, his being 'on trial,' will save the credit of your stable."

"Come," said I, "now do throw away that beastly weed you have been puffing this half-hour, for this cover which is not large is sure to hold a fox, and when he does go from here you will have enough to do with your horse, I can tell you, without blowing a fire under your nose."

The Master now gave a wave with his hand, and the Huntsman rode gently towards the cover. Not a hound stirred from his horse's heels till, having come close to the hedge, "Yoi over there; loo in! loo in!" sent every hound on to the hedge, and dropping on the other side not one was visible. The Huntsman now trotted to a gate leading into the cover, and only the field was to be seen. "Yoi! wind him there;" halloos the huntsman.

"Loo on! loo on, hounds!" cries the First Whip, finding two or three couple rather dwelling at the

lower end of the cover. A hound near us leaps out of the cover and canters up its side, probably finding it a pleasanter path to the Huntsman than through a close cover.

Up comes the Second Whip at the rate of twenty miles an hour, his whip-thong ready for use. The hound caught sight of him, and prepared to spring into the cover. "Ravager, Ravager," rated the Whip, but the first word was enough, and Ravager was safe over just as the Whip got to the spot he leaped from. A whimper is now heard from a well-known sure-finding hound. "Yo-oul-yo!" then sounded old Hannibal, throwing his tongue something like the deep-toll of St. Paul's.

"Have at him, there!" cries the Huntsman. "Hark, Hannibal, hark!"

"Hoik together! hoik together, hoik!" cries the First Whip, cantering up the side of the cover.

"Hark cry, hark cry, hoik!" says the Second, with a slight crack of his whip to a few hounds that did not fly to the halloo as quickly as he wished. "Cum up," says he to his horse, giving him a haul up and the double thong behind the girths. Crash goes the hedge, and in goes the Whip at bottom of the cover.

"Whoo, whoo!" shouts the Huntsman, who has just got a view of pug.

"Hark, hollar! hark, hollar, hoik!" cry both

Whips together; one to the body, the other to the tail hounds of the pack.

I now saw my friend gather up his reins, clap spurs to his horse, and off he was going in a canter. "Hold hard!" cried I. He pulled up and came back. "Where the deuce was you off to?" said I.

"Why, did you not hear the Huntsman?"

"I did," said I. "He viewed the fox, and wished to collect his pack, in which you hear the Whips are assisting him."

"Well," said my friend, "I have heard you say a man should be on the alert to get off in a good place. The fox is viewed, and here are we standing still."

"My good fellow," said I, "a fox viewed *in* cover is not exactly a fox viewed *out* of one; and if the cover was a large one he might be viewed a dozen times, and require a pretty good share of mobbing before he would be got out, though this is not the case here. Where can we be better? We are out of sight, though we command the part where a fox would, nine times in ten, break. We are down wind, so can hear all that is going on; and as we can't drive pug out, though the hounds will, here we had better remain unless we see good reasons to move."

Shortly after we heard the full chorus in cover coming towards us. "Turn your horse's head

from the cover," said I, "and be silent; so if pug wishes to go, don't let us stare him in the face." By us went the pack inside the cover. "Now for a break to the right," says I. Near the top of the cover over jumped Charley, the clean white tip of his brush, high carried, showed him no tired or draggled one. I saw my friend's mouth open like the new gutta percha busts sold as toys. "Be quiet, pray do," says I.

"There goes the fox," said my friend.

"And we will go after him; if you don't send him back," replied I. Pug had now got a field off, and on his jumping the hedge into the next, "Now, come along," said I, and galloping up to where he broke cover, I gave a "Tally-ho, away!" Ditto, of course, from my friend. "Now be quiet," said I; "we don't want to call away the hounds, but to let the Huntsman know Charley is off. The hounds had, however, heard the halloa, over came a couple and a half and raced up to where we stood. "Yo doit, Termagant!" said I. The old bitch looked at me, and I could fancy said, "You know the line; come, cap us on, and don't give me the trouble of picking it out." "It won't do, old lady," said I. "Yoi doit, there!" The old bitch put down her nose, "owned" it, and away she went. By this time over came the pack, and over came Will: I just waved my hat on the line. "Now," said I, "you see we have

not lost a place; let us see if we can keep it." Coming to the first fence I did not see the couple and a half that had gone off beyond it. "Ware hounds," cried I to my friend: the words were scarce out of my mouth before I saw the old lady streaming away stern down, leading the other couple. "Go along," cried I to my friend, making the same hint do for the grey, to whom, remembering his former propensity to baulk, I gave a refresher as hint conclusive. He took the fence beautifully; the body of the pack, who had regularly raced along a headland, taking the same fence in their swing.

"Yoik forward, good lads!" screeches Will, driving Claret through a bullfinch to the left of his hounds, to avoid being too close on them.

"Keep to the right," cried I to my companion, "or you'll be among them if they turn." Reaching the second fence, the leading hound threw up for a moment, then hit it off, and went away like a rocket.

"All right," said I, "he is off for Redlands; we shall have a taste of the brook presently." The short turn the hounds had made let all the field up. We were now going a clipper down hill to the meadows, the brook before us; in went old Termagant, still leading.

"Over he is," cried Will, "close to my side." The clergyman I had mentioned had, as usual,

got in front; over his horse went like a flying fish, almost skimming the water; ditto Fearon one hind leg just, and only just, breaking the opposite bank; young Roberts gave his hat his usual thrust down on his head, his old cripple grinding her teeth, but taking it clear and clean; by his side went Captain Oliver, his legs almost touching the water. My friend rode at it manfully, but held his horse too hard; he just and barely did it. Now for a souser, thinks I, on grey; but I suppose, from some lessons he had had, he went at it racing, and cleared it well, but making it a regular tilter from jumping high and wildly. Never was a finer *on tapis* for the next twenty minutes, my friend going like a trump; the grey now began stretching out his neck; and stretching out my legs, I eased him all I could to keep in anything like a place.

"It's pretty near U P, White Surrey," said I. Looking towards my friend I saw he was letting his horse make a spread eagle of himself; but he was not near enough to speak to. I had been nursing grey up a firm headland. A post and rail ran across part of the field, which most took. Grey just got over, hitting it hard. My friend, to avoid the timber, had gone out of his way, and was now powdering across a deep and heavy ridge and furrow to make up for lost ground. His horse went slower each stroke, till he got into

nearly that kind of out of time canter, the last resource of a beaten horse. He tried him at the next fence, but he stopped fairly, or rather unfairly, "pumped out." I trotted up to him.

"Why," cried my friend, "the grey is worth a dozen of this brute: he is regularly knocked up."

"He is blown, I grant you," said I, "and no wonder. But all the steel is out of grey; he could not go two fields further. We have done our best; the best can do no more."

"I suppose," said my friend, looking somewhat rueful, "we have only to go home."

"I do not think," said I, laughing, "we can do anything else, and luckily we have not far to go. Your horse will be all right in a few minutes, but grey is regularly sewed up, and won't want such another taste for some time."

We got home; my friend's horse had quite recovered, but grey was too far gone for this; he was, in the literal sense of the word, tired, and glad enough I was to get him home.

"He looks very queer," said my friend. "He don't mean to make a die of it, does he? Would you bleed him?"

"Die!" said I, "there is no more chance of his dying than of yours: he wants no bleeding; he is merely dead tired, and wants refreshing instead of bleeding. Give him a quart of my ale

and a couple of glasses of gin in it; this will stimulate his appetite; give him a cool but not cold mash, as soon as he will eat it; put him in the box, bed him up, and let him lie down as soon as possible; he will be stiff and tired to-morrow; just let him stretch his legs, led in hand, about midday, and next day he will be as well as ever."

"I will now give you a hint as to bleeding a horse after exertion, which should never be done without great caution. If after a long and severe day your horse shows symptoms of great distress, producing great palpitation, very quickened pulsation, a hot mouth, inflamed eyes, and every indication of coming fever, bleeding is quite proper, and bleed just in such quantity as lowers the pulsation to its proper beat, and quiets the palpitation brought on from over-excitement of the general system; but to bleed a horse merely because nature is in a temporary state of exhaustion, is only exhausting it still more for no purpose, and preventing his energies rallying as they would do of their own accord simply by rest, which is all the grey wants.

"Such horses seldom hurt: the fact is, their powers, or game, or whatever it may be, will not last long enough to bring the internal organs into a state likely to end in serious inflammation, their legs and spirits tire before the system is under excitement long enough to produce danger."

CHAP. VI.

Confidential Inquiry. — Conduct in the Field. — Harriers and Mr. Mullins.—Differences between Fox and Hare-hunting.—An Interlude.

"I CANNOT," said my friend, as we sat tête-à-tête during the evening, "understand the events of this morning, so we must chat them over, though I anticipate the result will not be very flattering to me. How was it that I, on the best horse in my stable, came really to a stand-still; while you, on the one we consider the worst, stopped him while he seemed at the time comparatively fresh; for, take it altogether, candour must allow you rode the grey closer to the hounds than I did the bay."

"Oh, my fair cousin, we must not say so," said I, laughing; "but, to be serious, I allow it was so, and I will explain all this. I found your grey, thanks to your head-man's good judgment, had become perfect as a fencer: this, good management can make most horses; but unfortunately, though we can much improve stamina, we cannot make it really good if nature has made it the reverse. I always suspected the 'gallant grey' in this particular, so I had nothing to trust to but making my way with him as short as possible,

which is straight to any point before us at the moment. I never ventured to take him fifty yards out of his way to avoid blind or suspicious fences, which I should have done on a better and stouter horse; you did not perceive it, but I comparatively watched every yard of ground he went, and nursed him over any part at all heavy or distressing. The moment I found any symptoms of failing, I took a pull at him, and thus saved him before matters got worse; and, twenty times during the run, had I persevered with him at the pace, I should have sewed him up in a few strides. I care not how good a horse may be, but there are particular periods when half a moderate field at the same pace, or if the ground gets deep, will stop the best horse that ever looked through a bridle, if we do not attend to him; but with all this, grey could not have got half a dozen fields further; he was not blown, as yours was, but he was beat. I nursed him up the headland before coming to the last flight of rails, so as to keep a pinch of jumping powder for them; and it was but a pinch, it was touch and go; that is, a very heavy touch and but just 'a go:' we will now see what you did. I must say you went quite like a workman as to nerve, but I could see two things: you were, if I may use a new term, 'tossed' in your saddle more than could have been pleasant; this arose chiefly from riding a couple of holes too

long, so all the shock came on your fork instead of being eased by your feet, knees, and thighs: you also sat as young field-riders often do, as if you were prepared to take flight if your horse made a mistake; that is, you sat loose; this, riding shorter will remedy: in the next place, you let your horse go, in riding phrase, 'abroad;' no horse alive can go thus long together: there are some, I allow, that will go without (comparatively) any hold on their head on the part of the rider; such a horse is one in fifty; and where it is the case, they are enabled to go so from naturally going in an unusually collected form. A horse going with his head out, and dwelling in his stride, is beating himself as fast as he can; collecting him will recover him, if not gone too far. Yet, sensible as horses are, they will not do this of their own accord, but, on the contrary, the more beat they become, the more they sprawl in their going: after this, they perhaps shorten their stride; but this arises from being reduced to an unconnected stiffened canter, if canter it can be called, and then shortly, 'who ho,' 'you're planted.'

"The next error you committed is one absolutely unpardonable in any rider across country; want of attention to the ground you ride over. If a horse has gone an improper pace across a heavy field, and is then put at a fence out of it, even supposing he clears it, he lands on the other

side in a state of absolute exhaustion; it pumps, as it were, every breath of wind from his lungs, and prostrates every power of his frame. You may see a man put his horse at an increased pace at a fence, and sometimes very properly so; but if he knows what he is about, he has taken a pull at his horse for a few strides before doing so, which gives him power, like the race-horse thus handled, to make a rush when called on. Timing this at the critical moment makes the difference between a Buckle, Chiffney, Jem Robinson, and such men, and the senseless, pully-hauly, cut-and-thrust riding of a calico-jacketed would-be jockey. It does not come to so nice a point in hunting, but the principle must be acted on if we mean to see the end of a trying run.

"I believe you found something like this to be the case when I came up to you; your horse was too much blown to rise at the fence you put him at; and if he had done so, he would probably have rolled over helpless, and possibly broken his neck on the other side; having my eye on you, I expected as much, when I saw you crossing that ridge and furrow. You don't seem to like timber much, so instead of keeping straight, as I did, on firm ground, you went round to a fence you liked better, and then had to try and make up lost distance on a half-blown horse, over a description of ground as trying as any in the world; no horseflesh living could stand this, unless it was, as

yours did, to 'stand still;' but you will know better after this."

"I suppose," said my friend, "we shall be prettily jeered the next time we show ourselves."

"That is a thing," said I, "I never trouble my head about. I hunt because I like hunting, ride because I like riding; if others choose to ride to please me and other persons, it is a condescension I am not disposed to return; but," continued I, laughing, "as you may be more fastidious than I, we shall get off very well, by telling a portion of the truth: the grey I was riding on trial tired, and you, as my guest and a stranger in the country, went home with me."

"What had I better do with White Surrey as you call him," said my friend; "I suppose he will never make a hunter?"

"He *is* a hunter," said I, "and a very pleasant one, but not for fox-hounds; he is very handsome, and very perfect. To carry a nobleman who keeps or hunts with harriers only, he is worth a couple of hundred as well as one. The poor animal is not to blame; he is very willing, and indeed very game, for he will struggle till nature can struggle no longer; he is better indeed than I expected, for he is no cur; he is just what he looks, a holiday kind of horse, wanting natural endurance of stamina: you have four others, so you will do well enough at all events for your

first season. Grey will make a capital cover hack, carry you the first burst when you wish it, and you can take your opportunity to sell him."

"Well," said my friend, "now leaving horses, let me ask you a question or two about hounds. When we viewed the fox away, and he was quite gone, why did you, after giving one halloo, desire me to be silent?"

"Because," said I, "the huntsman being with his hounds, one halloo was sufficient to tell him the fox was gone away: it was his business to lay his hounds on to the scent, not ours to call them to it. It very rarely happens that a case occurs where one of the field should take upon himself to halloo to hounds: it is a liberty, and a great one. Any halloo should be for the information of the men, not as a call to the hounds. Supposing such a case as hounds having come to a check, neither master, huntsman, or either whip in sight, and particularly if the pack are on bad terms with their fox, if a man has viewed him, it would be quite fair in him to lay them on to the line of the game; having done so, and they having owned the scent, let him hold his tongue, his temporary business as huntsman is done; he is not to cap and cheer them on, galloping by their side at the risk of causing them to merely race on, instead of hunting their game; for if he did, he would probably take them on at a pace that, unless scent lay very

high, they would overrun it, throw up, and there he would be in the midst of them, not knowing how to repair the mischief he had done, or probably being able to tell the huntsman when he came up, to any certainty, how far they really brought the scent on.

"If a man has put hounds on the line of their game, he should let them hunt it, keeping wide of them, and watching the leading hound, marking how far, and the spot to which, he really carried on the scent. Doing this, he is really useful to the huntsman. But a man should be a thorough judge of hounds and hunting, to take upon himself to give such information; for it in no way follows that, because the pack collectively ran on to a certain spot, that they carried on the scent thus far. If a leading hound or two are seen to fall back into the pack, or feather about a bit, the body of the hounds may rush forward, and those that were leading may follow, probably from mere habit; so if a huntsman was decidedly told that the scent was carried on to where at last the whole body threw up, he would be led into an error. Where the leading hound or hounds faltered, was most probably the actual spot to which the scent was brought. The information should be, 'such and such hounds led up to such a place,' probably a field or two off. The huntsman then knows what he has to trust to, if he can trust also

to his informant, who, unless he knows the hounds, or at all events hunting well, had better give no information at all."

"One more question," said my guest, "and then I will let you off for to-night; for, after giving the grey a lesson by day, and his master ditto at night, I dare say you will be glad to get rid of both."

"So far from it," said I, ringing the bell, "send for your groom, and let us hear how grey is by this time."

"Well, Martin," said my friend, on his servant coming in, "how is Lancer—dead or alive?"

"Oh, he's pretty near right again, sir. I gave him, as Mr. Hicover desired, some ale and gin: it soon seemed to set him alive, and an hour ago he eat his mash like a lyin."

"Have you tried any yourself, Martin?" said I.

"No, sir," said Martin, stableman-like, laying hold of his foretop from want of a hat.

"Do then, by all means," said I; "try it, men and maids, and drink the grey's health."

"Well," said I, "while they pass my bill in the lower house, which I doubt not they will do, 'nem. con.,' I in the upper one call 'question.' What do you want to know?"

"This," said my friend; "when the three hounds—I beg pardon, couple and a half—came up to us, what did you mean by 'Yo dot,' or

'Yoi don't,' or something of that sort you said in hunting tone to them?"

"'Yo doit,'" said I, pointing to my friend's empty glass, "that to *you* means mix. 'Yo doit' to a hound means hunt, or try. You saw our one halloo brought these hounds to us, a screech or two more would have brought the pack, possibly before the huntsman could get out of the cover, what should we have got by going off with a couple and a half of hounds? They would most probably, unassisted, have soon got off the line, and misled the body of the hounds; they quite understood me, though it seems you did not; and the little time it took them to stoop for the scent, let the pack up, and we got a very pretty thirty minutes' skirmish, quite as long as our powder lasted."

"One more question and I have done. Why did you cry 'ware hound' to me at the first fence?"

"Because," said I, "we had a little exceeded rules in going off with only a couple and a half of hounds, before the body had actually come up, and were settled to the scent; and having done so, if either of us had maimed a good hound, I should have hidden my diminished head as a sportsman, which I flatter myself I am reckoned. You was nearly on the direct line of the hounds. I did not see them when I warned you. Now suppose they were feathering about, from

pug having dodged down the other side of the fence, you would have leaped upon them. Making allowance for your enthusiasm, I roared 'Go along' loud enough, as soon as I saw the hounds clear of you; and after all, though you did not see it, Will shook his head at me for going off, figuratively speaking, without hounds, or at all events somewhat before the entire pack.

"Never," said I, "under any circumstances, if you can help it, ride on the line, that is, behind hounds, unless they are a considerable distance before you; always keep, as I believe a sailor would say, on 'their quarter,' that is, a little behind and a good deal on one side of them, in ordinary cases down wind; for, if they turn, you will mostly be a saver of distance by it; and if, from any circumstance, they are hid from you, your ear will tell you where they are, and what about. Let me give you one bit more of advice, if you really mean to be a fox-hunter. It is something like what I gave to a young friend entering a dragoon regiment: 'the king has made you an officer, make yourself a soldier.' To you, I say, 'fortune enables you to be a horseman; make yourself a sportsman.' For this you may take my word — such thorough sportsmen as the Dukes of Beaufort or Cleveland would as soon see the man who plays Punch with their hounds, as the man who thinks of nothing but himself, his horse, and

his riding; you might satisfy yourself of this at any time. Supposing the courtesy of the master of hounds induces him to address a stranger, if the latter, wishing to be complimentary in return, remarks that the master's horse is a fine one, he would of course return a civil but a very indifferent or careless answer; but let the stranger judgmatically remark the form of some particularly fine hound or two, the master cocks his ear directly, the stranger rises quicker than mercury in the scale of the master's opinion, and he will find himself doubly noticed from that moment.

"It would be just the same if the stranger address the huntsman, or even whips. Compliment a huntsman on the condition, form, and uniformity of his pack, he will think it worth his while to take even extra pains to show the stranger they are as good as they look; remark anything about his horse, he merely would look at you to endeavour to decide whether or not you are a horse-dealer; and if you gave him the slightest excuse for doing so, would give you a 'hold hard' in a tone that would show he thought you one of a sort likely to do mischief, and no possible good.

"I remember, as a boy, remarking to a huntsman a rather peculiar shaped snaffle he had on his horse, the cheeks of it being in the shape of an S; not, by-the-by, a very foolish shape either, though an ugly one, as it prevents the cheeks drawing

into the mouth. The only reply I got was first a stare, and that a rather sulky one. "I did not see what bridle they had put on." Had I known enough to have with reason remarked, that such or such a hound showed something of the Lonsdale or Beaufort kennels, he would have set me down as a wonder of a young one.

"The man who merely rides without attending to hunting, is held as great a bore and pest by a master of hounds, as would be some old fogy who pottered about with nine or ten couple of old blue mottles, if he showed himself at a fixture in a fast country; in truth, the old gentleman would be the least objectionable personage, as he would be soon got rid of; whereas the other would probably be a pest for the whole day.

"Pest the third is one of those gentlemen who either turn over, continually boring people to assist them, or perhaps stop the only practicable part of a fence, while they contemplate its height and probable width. The only way with such is to charge them, horse and all, knock them out of the way, beg pardon, and pass over. This will teach them to go; or, what will answer a better purpose, to keep out of the way.

"No man can ride a chace well, who does not ride boldly. He must do so in most countries to keep his place; but always let bold riding have a meaning and an end in it, and that end should be,

keeping where you can see most of the hunting; nothing, I conceive, makes a man look so little (as a sportsman) as when, after all but butchering his horse, if he is asked a question as to the hunting, to find he knows nothing about the matter, or what the hounds have been doing: one is almost tempted to say to such a man, 'What the deuce buisness have you here?' Any hounds are good enough for such a man: drafts from different kennels, and a bunch of red herrings well perfumed, would quite answer his purpose; any dogs would hunt this, and if he maimed one or two they would be of little more value than the herrings, or himself (speaking of him as a sportsman).

"What are we to do to-morrow," said my guest, "for I heard you tell the men we should want the horses at ten?"

"Why," said I, "though I hope my character, as a sportsman, ranks moderately well, I must admit I am not so keen a one as many men are; the fox-hounds' fixture to-morrow is fourteen miles from us, a country they seldom hunt, and one I never wish to see; nothing I detest so much as a rough, thickly enclosed, wood country; you have to badger a fox for an hour in one cover, he then only bolts off, and into another close by. If you keep outside you never see a hound, and if you get in you tear your clothes, your own and

horse's skin into the bargain; are lucky if you do not get him stubbed for no sport at all; and after coming home, it takes a man an hour to search for and pick thorns out of his legs. I don't ask much favour, but I do like a 'clear stage.'

"I mean to show you to-morrow one of the most perfect packs of harriers (ever and in all cases to be excepted those formerly belonging to his Majesty) I ever saw; their huntsman, though an elderly man, would ride at the Thames if he wanted to get to his hounds, and his whipper-in would follow him.

"You will, with old Mullins, see a description of bold riding found, I believe, with few men but himself; you will see him bundle his horse through, or over, such queer places as no other man would dream of encountering. His horses never refuse, and always get over, *somehow*; where they cannot jump, they will crawl up, and slide down; places where others would break their necks or backs; and certainly he does sometimes unexpectedly emerge from such extraordinary holes and corners as men and horses never could be expected to come from: as to following him through a day, the thing would be impossible; for, where you or I should be looking for a practicable part of a fence, through some unaccountable hole he rams his horse, and leaves one in amazement how on earth he ever got through. His horses

are often nearly on their nose, and at down jumps very often slide quite on their rumps; but, somehow, he never gets a regular purl. I once got him to take a very wild and uncertain leaper I had: he, in his quiet way, shoved him into all sorts of places; he never rides fast at a fence, does most of them as standing jumps; still, go over or through, they must. I gave him a five pound note, and he returned me certainly a hunter. There is nothing 'Quornite' in this, I allow; but all countries are not Leicestershire; he is a harrier huntsman, but send him to Melton, give him a Melton hunter, and I will answer for him he would turn at nothing, or let his horse do so either: his whip rides bold in another way; his horses are flying leapers."

On arriving next morning near where I knew Mullins and his harriers would be, we were rather late: but after riding about a little, I heard "Loak, loak, loak! yoi, loak!" "There's old Mullins's 'loak, loak,'" said I.

"What on earth does he mean by that 'loak,' or rather croak, of his?" said my friend.

"Why," replied I, "it matters little as to effect what sound you make to a horse or hound, provided they understand what you mean. By that monotonous sound he has from habit got into, his hounds know he means to encourage them to try, and as another bit of dog language of his own

if a hound speaks, you will very likely hear, 'Yoi, huck her out there.' What the 'huck' means is best known to himself and his hounds. It is not unusual to hear with fox-hounds, 'Yoi, push him out there:' Mullins's 'huck' does just as well, though savouring no little of the provincial."

We had now got on Eartham Common, where Mullins on his big bay, and his whip on his neat stringhalty grey, were surrounded by twenty couple of harriers, neat as print and all alive: three or four farmers, with heavy whips, were thrashing the broom and furze: the Master, a rather deformed man on a handsome grey, was occasionally encouraging some favourite hound; an old general, a friend of his, but somewhat about sixteen stone, was on an enormous beast, a dun with black legs, tail, and mane, with flesh enough on him to supply the pack for six months; a gentleman farmer, a crack rider on a chesnut so hot that he kept aloof from every one; the junior partner of a brewery on a very neat bay; a Roman Catholic priest, an attaché of the Master's household, on a nondescript brown mare; and a very large fat man, on a very small lean Galloway, with ourselves, composed the field. Riding up to the Master, "Allow me," said I, "to introduce my friend, Mr. ——."

"Most happy to see you, sir, with my little

'cry;' we shall endeavour to show you what sport we can, in the absence of fox-hunting."

"But in the presence of true hunting," replied I. The Master bowed in acknowledgment of the little compliment. Strange, when a little politeness so conciliates the feelings and good will of others, how few persons attend to its call!

"See, ho!" said I, gently to my friend, and putting my hand on his arm.

"See what?" said he.

"Don't you see her?" said I; "a hare?"

"No, I do not."

"Do you see that tuft of grass a little higher than the rest?"

"Yes."

"Do you see anything shine there? that is her eyes."

"Ah! I see her now."

"Now," said I, "this is my great objection to hare-hunting; when a fox-hunter is all enthusiasm, a hare-hunter must be still as the grave."

I held up my hat; the Master and Huntsman saw it; the former came up to us. Old Mullins kept on "Loak, loak!" drawing his hounds away from, instead of to, us. I pointed to the sitting hare: the practised eye of the hare-hunter saw her at once, and getting between her and his hounds, he prepared to put her up. "Turn your horse's head," said I, "and let her come this way."

Away she came, one ear forward, the other back, to catch any sound that might indicate where most danger lay, and making straight for a hole in the fence, through it she went.

"Why does not the Huntsman come up and lay his hounds on at once?" said my friend.

"Because," said I, "this is another of the different features between fox and hare-hunting, and one that I consider makes the latter comparatively so tame a sport.

"With a fox we always wish to get off on as 'good terms with him' as possible; with a hare they wish her to get at first a little advantage of the hounds; and I will tell, indeed show, you another reason why, harriers should be cheated into the fancy that they have found or hit upon their game, instead of its having been found for them. You see the Huntsman is now drawing his hounds towards the form she has just left, still encouraging them to try all the way. Notwithstanding this precaution, do you not see a couple or two of hounds with heads up, and looking about them. They are as awake to what has gone on, as we are, though their perfect discipline keeps them from attempting to break away."

"How should they know this?" said my friend.

"From the same sort of thing having constantly occurred to them. The young, newly entered hounds are not thus cunning, but a season

or two will make them so. Those hounds that, as you observe, are not putting a nose near the ground, saw me hold up my hat, or perceived the Master at once come off to us (gently as he did it), or found the Huntsman drawing them in a different direction to that he was before taking, and are quite aware of what any of these manœuvres means. But besides the wish of giving the hare proper law, if hounds were at once trotted off, as fox-hounds are, to a halloo or signal, they would always be looking out for something of the sort, instead of trying to find game themselves; they would become wild and impatient, which would render them worthless as harriers. Now they are coming close on the place. You see the rush that hound made to it; now he throws his tongue; he has it. 'Yoi there, Bluecap! that's it, old boy. Hoik, together, hoik!' Now, as Somerville has it, 'how musical their tongues.' Away they go, close as a peck of peas in a sieve; they take that low hedge in their swing, like fox-hounds. It is a peculiar feature with these, they never creep where they can jump, if scent lies high and they are sure of it."

"But," said my friend, "they are running away from us."

"Never fear," said I; "she has made for that plantation on the hill: while they rattle her through it, we will trot up; here is again one of the plea-

sures to some, and one of the drawbacks to others, of hare-hunting. In a general way there is little apprehension required as to being thrown out, or left behind. Hares on downs will certainly sometimes go as straight as foxes; it is a peculiar character in Irish hares to do so, which makes hare-hunting there, in a general way, a far superior sport to what it is with us. In an enclosed country like this, hares have not far to go to feed; consequently, they know every field, and always, in a larger or smaller space, make a ring of it, as you will see madam puss will here, after giving herself an airing over yonder hill. There they go, straight into the plantation; the Master, as you see, has stopped his horse this side of it. There goes Mullins into the cover. You can tell, by the lessening sound of their tongues, they are getting towards the other side. Now they turn towards us again; there she comes. Now that young farmer has headed her; so much the better, as it happens, for away she goes down the hill: now she will give us a chivy across the grass fields to Beacon Hill: out they come, now for a gallop. Come," said I, our horses at three parts speed, "you must allow the little ones are not caught in a canter; the truth is, with a good scent, when they can run breast high, they can go pretty nearly as fast as fox-hounds, which proves the justice of what I have told you before. All

hounds, unless they are the regular southern sort, can go individually fast enough: it is the head they carry, the country they go over, and keeping at it or not, that makes the difference between a fast run and a pottering one. Look at them across the pasture; even Salter on his hot fast chesnut is not at play, and Mullins is shoving along the big bay at his best: bravo old fellow! he knows his hounds are right; he caps them on in true fox-hunting style. I am not sure (for, as the bard has it, 'pride attends us still'), but that this ultra ebullition of energy is in honour of you as a stranger and fox-hunter, for it is not his usual wont. Please the pigs, old chap, you shall get half-a-crown instead of a shilling for this. Look at the Master, how he powders the grey along: there's the old General on the renowned *dun*. He has changed his colour; he is now 'done *brown*,' and like the horse of a friend of mine yesterday."

"Mind what you say," says my friend, laughing, and shaking his fist at me, "I'm the biggest man."

"So said the bay yesterday," replied I, "and 'cursed' your 'cumbrous weight,' or something else."

"Halloo!" said my friend; "why, there's the brook we crossed yesterday."

"Just so," said I, "only not quite so wide just

here; in it she goes," said I, viewing madam, who found that she "who hesitates is lost."

"Will the Huntsman take it?" said my friend.

"As sure as you take your dinner," said I.

"And we too, I suppose?" said my friend, "as in honour bound."

"Throw honour to the dogs," said I, "in hare-hunting. At sixteen I should have done so as a bit of show-off, but add thirty to sixteen we think differently. 'Charge, Chester, charge!' if you like it; but I have had too many sousers to risk one for nothing, for back they will come from Beacon Hill, as sure as a hill it is. There goes Mullins," said I, "all right; he is paid to keep close to his hounds, and look how he rides at it, his horse going just as he pleases; but he has been in it too often to get in again; over he is. Now look at Sam, his whip; see how artistically he collects the little grey, sends him spinning at it, and, as he lands, the bank seems to 'spring elastic from his airy tread.'"

Swash goes the water, in goes a horse, and under goes a man; it was the young farmer, who, on a big-headed, coarse bred, four-year-old brute, rode for a show-off at the water. The nag plunged up, and young Clodpole plunged half up and half down in the water. Fools and their horses are soon parted, as well as fools and their money, thought I. "Wade to your horse," said I, laughing; "you can't be wetter."

"I can't get my legs out of the clay," said Clodpole.

"Then what the deuce business had you there?" said I.

Fallacious as may have been my prognostics of my own career in life, they were correct enough of that of the hunted hare; back she came from the Beacon Hill, blackened was her colour, and the reeling high and stiff gait told a tale not to be mistaken. On came the pack like a miniature hurricane; on came old Mullins on the big bay.

Poor puss, your hours are numbered! Fate follows thee with untiring footstep, and a life unconscious of premeditated harm to others pleads but feebly against its stern resolve: so might soliloquise he who in life's chace has played a somewhat prominent and hardly contested race.

The pack now caught a view; each hound rushed impetuously forward; up a high bank reeled the sinking hare, and through a well-known meuse she slid feebly; over went the high-mettled little pack; over went Mullins, taking part of the hedge with him. "Wheek! wheek!" and poor puss was soon in a leathern case behind Sam's saddle.

I am not of a particularly sensitive turn, but the plaintive "wheek" of a dying hare grates on my nerves: the fox dies a game, a fighting foe;

I admire his courage, yet hold his death as the ordinary fate of warfare. We can see a brave fellow cut down in mortal fray; but the shriek or moan of a woman appals the stoutest heart. I cannot but feel, in hare-hunting, I am pursuing an animal that has no means of defence against its destroyer. Cut her up by a shot, and the thing is over; even in a course, it is so short, we kill her while in full vigour; but the reeling gait of a tired hare annoys me. There is no devilry in it; and without a spice of that, most things I hold as tame. I really admire hare-hunting, but I never could be a hare-hunter.

"Well," said I, "as we have given our nags a breathing for to-morrow, what do you say to home and luncheon? After that I have bespoke a little fun for you; of a new kind, perhaps, to you."

"Whatever you like," courteously said my guest.

"Well then," said I, "we will do the amiable to the master and men, and then get homewards." "Loak! loak!" was going old Mullins, trying for another hare, when we popped half-a-crown each into his hand, and my friend conciliated Sam by the same token. "Allow me," said I, addressing the Master, "to express my own and friend's regrets that we have an engagement that obliges us to leave you, thanking you for as real a speci-

men of hunting as could be seen." The Master made a complimentary reply, moved his hat, and we moved off.

On reaching home, "Is Jack come?" said I to a strapper that I had for three or four seasons engaged for six months each year.

"Yes, sir."

"And brought the materials?" said I.

"All right, sir," says the fellow, grinning with delight from ear to ear.

Ben was too much of a character not to be introduced to my reader. "He had been brought up in a racing stable, and till he was fifteen was very small and light. At that age he knew as much as many old men, and consequently rode light weights for the stable. All at once he increased in height and size, so as to be useless in a racing stable: he was then employed in livery stables. At twenty he was thirteen stone. He has been everything; has fought several minor pitched battles; is a wrestler, dog-fancier, a capital shot; has been a coachman, guard, colt-breaker, and ostler at inns. He has various accomplishments of rather a singular description: cases his companions of their loose cash, when he can, at thimble-rig, pricking in the garter, and cards; has all the notes of Punch in perfection, turns a somersault, and drinks a quart of ale standing on his head. With all this, and I dare say other

tricks he does not choose to show here, he is a civil, willing fellow, and as a strapper can do two ordinary men's work. I never had reason to find fault with him but once, when I detected him making one of my horses lie down in his box, which he had taught him to do when he made some signal to him. He and Jack, whom you will see presently, are old friends, and, I strongly suspect, make summer campaigns together, probably to fairs and races; they keep, however, their mutual secret: he answers my purpose, and you will see him shortly in his glory."

Young Roberts and a friend of his came, as I had asked them, to lunch. This ended, we summoned Messrs. Jack and Ben to our presence. Jack was a tall, loose-made, big-proportioned, fellow, with a good-humoured countenance, strongly favouring gipsy origin; a green velveteen shooting coat, with pockets of all sizes, into and out of which, no doubt, many odd things went and came; at his back hung a square hamper-like basket, supported by a stick on his shoulder, that no doubt, on emergency, Jack could use with dexterity and effect.

"Well, Jack," said I, "have you got the varmint?"

"All right, master, and all ready," says Jack.

"Now, Ben," said I, "fetch the dogs."

Ben returned with my three terriers.

"Well, they *are* nice uns," said Jack; "but I'll show you two beauties," pulling from his pocket a little pied dog of perhaps eight pounds weight.

"Will he kill a rat?" said my guest.

Jack gave a smile not to be described. "I dare say he'd try, sir," said he; "but here's what I call my wonder," said he, pulling by the ear out of the other pocket a far smaller black and tan.

"I suppose," said my friend, "it would be a hard fight between him and a rat?"

"Werry," replied Jack, with another of his smiles, "and lasts a werry long time."

"Ten minutes, perhaps?" said my guest.

"Not quite," replied Jack.

"Do you want to sell him?"

"Why, as to that, sir, I sells anything; everything has its price."

"You for one, I suppose, Jack?" said I.

"Why, you're not much out there, master," said he, with a sly look; "that is, for anything in a hordinary way."

"What do you want for the little dog?" said my friend.

"Only three suvs to you, sir."

"Would he kill a rat in five minutes?" said my friend.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," replied Jack,

"put down five suvs agin the tyke; if he don't kill five rats in half that time, he's yourn for nothing; if he does, the suvs be mine in course."

"You had better not," said I to my guest; but he had said done, so Jack slyly said, "Too late, master, a bet's a bet in all honour."

We now repaired to the granary, where a vacant bin was the field of action. Jack drew from the basket a wire cage, that fitted inside it, in which were perhaps five-and-twenty rats. Jack, without any apparent caution, thrust his hand in at the top and brought one out, held in a peculiar manner, so as to prevent his turning his head, and put him into the bin; he thus caught four. The fifth, a fine old grey fellow, made an attempt to turn and bite. "Would ye," said Jack, giving him a squeeze with his thumb that made the rat's eyes nearly start from their sockets, and among the rest he went. Jack held the little dog on the edge of the bin, struggling, and fairly screeching with impatience.

"Now, master," says Jack, "you keep time; I'll trust to your honour. Say when's the time, master."

I waited till the seconds hand of my watch was on the unit point: "Now," said I.

He slid the dog down. Not a sound was now heard: he took each rat in the right place, gave him one craunch and a shake, threw him down,

and seized another; under three minutes the rats were dead enough.

"I wish you luck with him, sir," said Jack; "he's a pretty good un among worser."

Whether this spice of fun was new to my friend, I know not, but he offered a challenge to every and all the dogs in England to kill rats against his new purchase.

"Why, Lord love ye," says Jack, "I showed you that ere dog as a beauty; I don't call him a ratter."

"Show me the dog that can beat him," said my friend; "here's ten pound on it."

"Take him," said Jack, in his warmth of, I suppose, friendship to me, giving me a somewhat unceremonious dig with his elbow.

"Put up your ten pounds," said I, "and bet ten shillings with Jack; for I must not have my tykes disparaged. Put ten rats in the pit, Jack," said I, "and we'll give Tory a chance."

Under three minutes not a rat shook a leg.

"Come," said I, "there's a lesson for you in this sport, as well as in hunting. My dogs, as you see, kill rats, but they are only half rat-killers; you will learn something more by a visit to Denmark Street or Bunhill Row."

It was now near dinner time; my visitors could not stay, but we insured meeting at Russington Gorse on the morrow.

CHAP. VII.

Peculiarities. — Hints on Leaping. — Armed for either Field. — A Bargain. — Going further to fare worse. — A pleasant Acquaintance. — Biding the Time. — Monsieur Tonson again. — Adieu.

"That old Mullins," said my friend (when we were alone), "is most certainly a curious fellow: do you call him a good rider?"

"Nothing bordering on it," said I, "and but few huntsmen to harriers are, while many huntsmen and whips to fox-hounds are first-rate in this particular: and why they are so arises from various causes; in the first place, though all hounds require attention, fox-hounds do not require that unremitting attention that hare-hounds do; the scent of the fox is stronger; he runs beyond all comparison straighter; for if even, as is sometimes the case, he gets back to where he was found, or near it, he does this as it were octagonally; he runs straight from point to point; he is, we know, as wily as the hare, but he does not show it in the same way in running; he does not have recourse to her dodges and doublings, nor does he run foil near so much. The huntsman to a pack

of harriers must never take his eyes off their working, or, in case of a check, he will not know what to do. Fox-hounds run to a far greater certainty, so a huntsman has opportunity to attend to his riding and his horse. The hare-hunting huntsmen, thinking only of their game and hounds, usually get into one of two faults,— they either bore at their horse's mouth to assist themselves in a loose and careless seat, till the animal has no more mouth than a pig; or they leave him to himself, without regard to ground, or how he is going on it: those few who ride well make the handiest hunters in the world of their horses: for instance, Mr. Davis, who hunted the king's harriers; his two hunters were as perfect as cats at fencing: but we must recollect he was a man of no ordinary head or manners: true, he was a huntsman, but he was a king's huntsman, and a man very superior to even that situation. Now, as regards old Mullins, or any man like him, I only told you he was an extraordinary and bold rider in a particular way, though, in justice to him, I believe he would ride bold anywhere: he has two great camels of horses, far too big to be good for any hunting purpose but his. He has ridden each for years; he knows them, and they him; he has accustomed them to take care of themselves; so they do, and of him also. He puts them at most things in a stand, and when

they raise themselves, what is a gate to other horses, is a stile in height to them."

"Then," said my friend, "great height must be a great advantage in a hunter."

"If he had nothing to do but take standing jumps, no doubt the bigger the better; but spring is the great thing in a flying leaper; and so far as galloping goes, though length of stride tells with the racer for a mile and a half, fifteen, two, or three is in my humble opinion the true lasting galloping height for the generality of countries or even courses, if of a long length. In riding at the brook, as you saw Mullins do to-day in a most unworkmanlike way, it mattered little with him; for, I dare say, his horse, since he rode him, has jumped that brook a hundred times, so he knows what to be at: but ride the generality of long-striding horses like him at the same place, in the same way, the consequence would be, from want of shortening their stride in coming to it, they would take off five or six feet further from the bank than necessary, thus making fifteen feet twenty-one, and in proportion as might be the width of water.

"There are three leaps that many bold and good riders like least of any, namely, timber, water, and walls. Without pretending to equal such riders, I object to neither, provided your horse is fresh and knows his business. I consider

an ordinary gate a very safe jump, the taking off is usually firm, a horse can measure his leap accurately, and it is not as high as the usual fences we ride at. Water, I am aware, most horses very much dislike, and it is very apt to produce a baulk; so far I dislike it: but, in a general way, its worst effect is a souse, unless your horse jumps short, when a sprained back is often the result. Walls I hold one of the safest leaps we can ride at; you, and your horse, can measure them to a nicety: a few stones displaced seldom brings on a fall, and a brick and mortar wall is seldom or ever met with in hunting. If I met such an one, I am free to confess I should decline such an encounter. This reminds me of a circumstance that occurred to me in the county of Galway, in Ireland. A friend had mounted me on his best horse, hounds were running hard, a wall was before me; no joke of a wall, no low Somerset or Oxfordshire one, but a regular Galway poser. There it stood to be looked *at*, but not looked over: to my left I heard stones, and saw a horseman or two go over where the wall was lower. I was pulling up my horse, intending to follow in their track: 'Go along, ye divil, and don't disgrace my horse!' shouted the well-known voice of my friend near me. 'Here goes, then,' said I, trying to persuade myself I felt no fear, and using, contrary to my usual wont, strong 'Latch-

ford persuasion' to my horse. Rattling right and left, forward and backwards, fell the stones, and the honest Galway crack landed me, really with no great effort so far as I could feel, on the other side. Over came my friend, a thirteen stone man, on a much smaller horse than the one I was riding. Being safe, I felt for the honour of my country from the hesitation I had shown; but excuse me, brother sportsman, it was my first day in Galway — a situation of no small trial, as better horsemen, and braver men by far, I trust will allow.

"This said wall not being more than a mile from my friend's house, I privately measured next day: from the spot from whence the horse's fore-feet had risen to the top stone, taking a level from those not displaced, was the width of my hand less than six feet; this, I am quite sure, he had cleared with his knees, but the chasm he had made by some of his feet or legs had reduced it nearly a foot. I never cared two-pence for a wall afterwards, save and except brick or stones and mortar; such, I confess, I ever most religiously eschewed, unless very low ones.

"The chief, indeed only, danger in timber leaping is a horse breasting it, or not raising his knees high enough: when this is the case, unless it breaks, a fearful somersault is the usual result: but this, if a horse knows his business, mostly

arises from the error or foolhardiness of the rider. Allow me, therefore, to give two rules never to be departed from, unless it might be in a cause of life or death, as in the case of a friend of mine. He, fully accoutred, put his charger at top speed at an awfully high and massive timber fence, and cleared it into an orchard; but three French lancers at a man's heels is a hint we do not get unless *hunted* instead of hunting. Never ride a beaten horse at timber of any importance, and never ride any horse at it fast. If it is so slight that you know it will easily break, it may be done without danger; but even then I hold it a bad practice, for if a horse breaks it without hurting himself, it will probably induce him to try the same thing, when failing in the breakage of timber would probably produce that of neck, back, or bones.

"The great reasons why horses should not be ridden fast at timber are, it does not give them time to measure its height; it does not give them time to measure their stroke, so as to take off at the proper distance; they get too close to it to rise properly, or they take off so far from it as to render their clearing it hazardous, and, at best, a very great exertion; but, worse than all, when going with great velocity, a horse cannot rise to any considerable height.

"The ordinary run of stiles, though lower, I consider far more dangerous than a moderate gate,

or post and rail. Stiles are rarely to be broken: not being high, horses are more careless at them. Gates or high rails more alarm them; but, worse still, stiles are often in cramped situations, and the taking off, or landing, or both, is on puzzling ground, such as a narrow footpath, and one side or the other is often a ditch, and narrow plank for foot-passengers; this must be cleared, or an awful fall is the almost sure consequence.

"Double post and rails require a horse that knows his business well: if they are pretty close together, they may be taken at a swing, and not being high, may be ridden at fast, in order to get sufficient impetus for the effort: but if to be taken 'in and out,' they must be ridden at leisurely, otherwise, in clearing the first flight, your horse gets so close to the second he cannot rise, and down he comes over them. I had one horse so clever at this, that if they were very narrow between, and he at all blown, he would take the first so obliquely as for an instant to stand all but side by side between both, then throwing himself with a kind of twist over the second. But on a tired horse, narrow post and rails are very hazardous; he cannot take them at once, and he must collect his legs very close to have room to do them at twice; and they are still worse if the ground between is hog-backed, or treacherous foothold.

"Water-jumping is effected on quite a different plan. Figuratively speaking, we cannot ride too fast at wide water, and for these reasons: horses do not take it willingly, at least but few do, and unless ridden very freely at it are apt to refuse; but as a reason more important than this, we want a strong impetus to carry a horse over wide water, and the faster we go at it the less elevation he will make in his jump; a horse should skim water like an oyster-shell from a boy's hand: the cannon-ball being impelled by a foreign power, requires a certain elevation to go a given distance; but an animal being impelled by his *own* powers, wastes that in height that is wanted for width. We do occasionally meet with horses apt to refuse wide water from timidity only; such, if driven too forcibly at it, become more alarmed still, and will, under such circumstances, refuse to a certainty; such must be coaxed up to it, making the pace as good as we can at the same time. Very timid horses, however, seldom make very brilliant leapers at anything. We should observe one thing, however, in riding at water, let the pace be ever so great: collect your horse before coming to it; never let him, as it were, stride up to it; or he will not take off in the right place; and if the taking off is at all rotten, he will probably flounder into it, or not clear it: if I may use a figurative term, 'spin' him up to it well

primed and collected; you cannot in usual cases, if you do this, go too fast at water."

My friend and myself went to next day's fixture. On the hounds being thrown into a cover, "Come along," said I, "we will get in," and, opening a bridle-gate, I walked my horse a hundred yards up a ride. "Let us stop here," said I, "till the hounds have drawn past us; we can then take a ride to the left, that runs up the middle of the cover."

"Why," said my friend, "do you get into this cover, when the last time we were out you remained outside all the time the hounds were drawing and were running their fox?"

"For several reasons," said I, "which I dare say I shall have time to explain. The cover where we found our last fox was not more than perhaps twenty acres; it is so thick that more time would be lost in getting half-way through it than in making its whole circuit, if we had wanted to do so. From its small size, whichever way a fox broke, we could hear of it, and could get round by the time the hounds could get out of cover: from that part of the country there is no particular point that foxes, in a general way, make to; so they are influenced in that particular by circumstances: we were down wind, so, unless we had found a fox who had come from some distant country, there was little chance of his

going away in an opposite direction to where we waited. Now this cover is fully a hundred acres; there are bridleways in all directions; even where there are none, it can be easily got through, and the fence out of it can be jumped at any point: should we be on the side opposite to where a fox might go off, we could hardly catch such hounds as these. But there is another reason why we should be where we can command the hounds: there are some very strong fox-earths at Dornton Wood, some five miles from here, to which foxes often make; and I have seen them make for this favourite point when it was directly up-wind to get there; for, let me tell you, a fox will at times face a hurricane to make his point. I have seen one defy a whipper-in to turn him: he would, in certain cases, be ridden over before he would be driven from his line. Under these circumstances, I wish to be prepared to get a place, let the break be from where it will; but see, the Master is waiting in cover also, and a great part of the field behind him, so I trust I have not led you wrong. Hark! by George! that's a view. They turn short to the right, clap up that ride, they are too close to him to allow him to make his toilet — he won't stop to even change his slippers."

A loud shout outside the cover told us Charley was "over the border."

"Come along," said I to my friend, "we're

all right." At the end of the ride three moveable rails led out of the cover; now the moving of rails, though quite excusable and prudent in getting *into* a cover, is a slow way of getting *out*. My nag did them neatly, ditto my friend's.

"Twoo, twoo, twoó," went the Huntsman's horn, for the benefit of the tail hounds.

"Hark forward, hoik!" cries the Second Whip, his thong echoing all round the cover.

"Where is the First Whip going at such a pace?" said my friend.

"Why, there's an earth in that cover you see half a mile off; it's a nasty place to get to, so he is making for it to give pug a hint to take another line. Now he has stopped his horse, the leading hounds have turned to the right; he is now trotting to come into his place; we have a beautiful country before us."

"We're in luck," said I; "Charley has given us a turn."

"Just look back. There come the field, who by chance had not got off in so good a place as ourselves."

Close behind us came young Roberts, his thorough-bred old mare making play at thirty miles an hour.

"Take the next fence a little oblique to the right," cried I, doing the same. "Well saved," said I, my friend's horse hitting it hard.

The country was now grass, the pace too good to let the field do more than hold their place with a good deal of tailing to boot.

"Keep his head straight," said I to my friend nearing the next fence, "and spin him at it; there's a yawner t'other side."

Over we went, our horses taking it abreast.

"Come up," cries Roberts, not a length behind, giving the old mare a lift, who, with her nostrils somewhat of the widest from catching us, was yet going like a bird. "Go it, ye cripple," cries he, giving his mare a pat on the neck, and a slight scientific pull to ease her.

The country was now just what all countries should be, the scent lying breast high.

"Hold hard, gentlemen," cried the Huntsman, the leading hound beginning to feather right and left. He caught it again. I could not help one "Yoi, at him, Stormer!" as the hound went streaming away.

My friend went like a trump; we had had about fifteen minutes without a check. The hounds were now going a terrible pace, down a long hill in a pasture, — "Now for the timber jumpers," said I, pulling my horse almost into a canter at a stiff post and rail on a bank. Roberts did the same. My friend passed between us, and as our horses took it abreast, over went my friend in advance, a most "royal crowner," into the next field.

"Are you hurt?" cried I and Roberts, pulling up.

"No," said my friend.

"Then," cried I, as Wellington said, "Up boys, and at 'em!"

Off went Roberts.

"Come," said I, "you are longer getting up than getting down; never mind your stirrup, put it on as you go."

The hounds were now a field a-head, we put on the steam. "Tally-ho!" said I, passing my friend. The hounds threw up a minute in a small fox-gorse cover; at something rushed Abelard; the crash was like that of a brass band; poor Charley just showed for a moment, and whoo-whoop told the straggling field they need not hurry themselves.

"A dog-fox, my lord," said the Huntsman to the Master, who had just come up on his second horse.

"And he," shaking his tail most energetically, "rather a fast thing, gentlemen," said the Master, with that urbanity inseparable from high breeding. "At least," added he laughing, "I found it so."

"Just twenty-eight minutes, my lord," said I. "I'll tell you what, Roberts," said I, "when your mare dies, if you will give me her head, I'll have it properly prepared, and have a glass case made to keep it in. She is true to the blood of the Filhos."

"At all events," said he, bowing to my friend, "her breeding is high enough to induce her to do her best to keep in good company."

"A very choice thing, sir," said I to the distiller, well knowing he had seen little of it.

"Rather so," said he, looking as amiable as if one of his customers' acceptances had been returned on his hand.

"Will says he means to draw Walford for a second fox," said Roberts. "I hate that stick-in-the-mud place. I'm off."

"What would you like?" said I to my friend. "I am quite at your disposal, though I think, like my friend, the place they are going to detestable."

"I vote, then, for home," said my friend, "and a chat over the day's hunting."

"Agreed," said I; "for as my wife will return home in a day or two, we will make the most of our time for such matters during her absence; for, excepting in your particular case, I always banish horses and dogs, as subjects of conversation, after we have done with them as our morning amusement."

"Before I ask you any questions as to our day's proceedings, I want to buy the horse you rode to-day; or, as you say you think very highly of the one I rode, can't we manage a swap?" demanded my friend.

"I think I know why you want mine," said I, "so you may as well tell me."

"I want him, then," said he, "from his being so uncommonly fast."

"You allude," said I, smiling, "to my going away from you after your fall. Now I will explain this, which will perhaps save you from giving, at some time or other perhaps, an exorbitant price for some horse that may not be worth it. We had, from your mishap, got a field in the rear. I viewed the fox into the gorse, saw he was dead beat, so rather unceremoniously gave you the go-by; I could have done this at any moment during the day. This merely shows that my horse could beat yours in a race, but is by no means an incontestable proof that as a hunter he can get over a country faster than yours. He has those powers of increased speed, for a short distance, that wins a race, and it seems has captivated you; but recollect that such speed could only last for a field or so. A slow hunter I detest, because he is always at his best, which must always distress both horse and rider; but your horse is very fast. The little spurt I made was not absolutely necessary, it was merely a little bit of pride to be up at the moment the fox was run into. Your horse is as nearly thorough-bred as one not quite so can be, and is, I should say, fast enough to win a hunter's

stake; but, let me tell you, my horse was in the Derby, and ran very forward, though not placed. He afterwards won a couple of very good stakes. In doing the last he was severely punished; from that time he turned both savage and sulky, could scarcely be got to start, and when he did would not run. They threw him out of work for that season, tried him the next, found him just as bad. He was then tried as a gelding; he left off his savage propensities, but was as sulky as ever in running. If he was punished for it, he would stop at once and kick; in short, as a race-horse, was not worth a farthing. I bought him for fifty pounds, and, by patience and coaxing, have made him, as you see, a very perfect and, as he is considered to be, very superior hunter. I have refused a large price for him; but put any inconsiderate or hasty tempered man on him, they would not agree for a day. I never strike him severely with either whip or spur; he does not require it; but even if he did, he would not bear it; so you see, if you gave me two hundred for him, and I have been offered that, you would not get a better horse than your own, though in racing capability a faster one. If it were left to me to value the two horses between friends, I should value mine at less than yours. They are equally good as hunters, and yours can carry a stone more weight."

"I gave," said my guest, "a hundred and fifty guineas for my horse, or at least your friend did for me."

"And I consider him worth more money to any man to-morrow, if he wants a fine horse and good hunter," said I.

"But," added my friend, "I consider your horse as good as given to you."

"That is more than his owner did, I can tell you," said I, "for he jokingly wished me 'joy of my bargain;' but then, recollect, he was a mere turf man, and possibly thought I was fool enough to buy the horse intending to run him. This shows you how much the value of horses depends on their being placed in situations for which their qualities fit them. I gave quite as much as he was worth at the time. He had only as recommendations good size, good looks, and action, and is of the best running blood (in stable phrase), 'both sides of his head,' in the kingdom. To set against that, he was only rising five, not the best of tempers, at times restive, and would not jump a potato trench. His fashionable blood was of no use to him as a gelding, and as a hunter, whether a horse is by (we will say) Lancecost at twenty-five guineas, or Launcelot at eight, is no great matter: very likely the latter might get the best hunters; for, let it be remembered, that supposing a horse to be winner of the Derby

Ledger, two thousand guineas, &c., he is a superior speedy and stout race-horse for such distances; but after going fifteen minutes across country, might very possibly show himself as rank a cur as ever went under a saddle; few horses will cur it till in distress, more or less. The difference between a stout or weak horse is therefore, how soon, in accordance with the pace, distress begins. Racing stoutness is so very different to the same quality in a hunter, that we can judge very little indeed of what sort of hunter a horse will turn out from his blood, unless where a thorough-bred horse has shown his stock to be good as hunters; and of late years, when long lengths have become almost exploded, the winner of races is a far more uncertain sire to produce hunters than he was when heats and four miles were in vogue. Thus, you see, my horse at the time he was bought was really no better bargain than yours."

"I allow the justice of all you say," said my friend, "but that little bit of extra speed flits before my eyes at this moment. Come, I'll give fifty for it, that is, fifty between the horses."

"Very well," said I; "as you now know all about my horse you shall have him."

"I dare say," said my friend, "you will pick up such another bargain as you did in the horse I have bought."

"I do not think that at all unlikely," said I laughing. "I do poke a horse out of queer corners sometimes, though I never buy 'three-cornered horses.' I hate an ugly one, or common-bred looking beast."

"Now," said he, "this being over, I want to know why you told me to take that hedge and ditch diagonally, when I have heard you say horses cannot go too straight at fences?"

"There are not at present half-a-dozen fences in this country," said I, "like the one in question; but I have hunted where they are common; and the man who has taken that farm comes from such country. That hedge," said I, "is chiefly a live one; before he came, it was a regular 'bullfincher;' the bottom growth of the thorns as big as a man's arm or leg. He has cut these partly through, at perhaps two foot and a half from the bottom; the upper part is laid down all one way; if your horse took this in the least diagonally *towards the growing part,* and hit it, it would no more give way than the strongest gate that ever was made, and down you must come. Or if you take such a fence straight and hit it, the force of the horse is not sufficient to draw the branch from its position: but taken diagonally towards the smaller and brushy end of the hedging, if you hit it, it yields, goes with your horse as it were, and he figuratively slides over it. Taking any fence

diagonally, of course increases the length of the leap, yet that is better than jumping directly towards a kind of living post, instead of away from it; but I know of no other fence that should be thus ridden at or taken."

"Resolved most satisfactorily," said my friend; "but I think I have you a little on the hip on one point."

"Very likely you have," said I; "then pray throw me over."

"You told me the other day that I blew my bay from riding him over a ridge and furrow field, instead of up a headland; now I saw you to-day, to use a term of your own, 'spin' yours across such another ridge and furrow like fun."

"You did," said I; "but I was not on a horse half blown; and again there is a vast deal of difference in ridge and furrow, not merely as to the firmness of the ridge but also as to its width; there is a particular width that enables your horse to land on each ridge in his stride, so the furrow does not interfere with his going; he comparatively goes on level ground, so long as he goes, or is held to an even length of stride. I cut off a considerable distance by crossing where I did; you made a kind of circuit; and such was the kind of ground, that your horse's fore-feet in one stroke came on to the ridge, the next in the furrow; you must have felt this, should have

turned him, and gone straight up instead of across, in doing which you should take the crown of each ridge or the furrow, whichever you find the firmest. I hope I have now excused what I did. And now," said I, "let me compliment you on your seat and hands; you are really a good horseman. You only want to study cross-country navigation; this, practice will teach."

"Particularly," said my guest, good-humouredly, "when it is *tangible* practice, as in the case of the post and rails to-day; was that my fault or the horse's?"

"Most unquestionably yours," said I, "and one, I dare say, you will never repeat. You saw the rails were not such as to give way, consequently required to be done clean. It is, as I have said, in most cases unsafe to ride fast at stiff timber. The only case where I consider it allowable is when the beat to it is up hill; here a little extra impetus is wanted, and in going up hill horses will shorten their stride of their own accord. Going down hill at a high jump is always unfavourable; but going down hill, and fast too, makes it all but impossible for a horse to rise. You saw Roberts catch hold of his mare and slacken her pace, before he came to it; you could not have had a better guide than he; you saw me, whom you are pleased to consult, do the same; but you 'rushed like a torrent down the vale.'

However, we must allow you were the first over; this might not have happened on an old cunning horse, he would very likely have slackened his pace himself, or if you had so driven him that he could not, he would very likely have refused, rather than attempt what he would have felt he could not do. Your horse, having had less experience, and possibly never a fall before under similar circumstances, tried that which he could not accomplish; it will do him good; he will be a better judge next time.

"To-morrow," said I, "with your consent, I wish to show you another pack; it is one that has only a couple of fixtures within reasonable reach of me, and even then I very rarely join them; I admire neither master, men, hounds, nor field. We will send the horses on to-night, for it is sixteen miles off. I should not take you there now, but that the foxes they find there mostly belong to, or at all events take towards, this part of the country, and are killed nearer here than they are found.

"These hounds hunt a good but somewhat rough country, which quite suits those who hunt with them. The master piques himself on being not only a 'bruising rider,' but a bruiser also, and is not very particular as to language if any thing offends him; he keeps a large stud, has always a couple of second horses out for himself

or his huntsman on emergency; his men are, as you may guess, something like himself; his hounds are something the same, a little, and not a little, inclined to riot; there is more hallooing, whooping, and rating with these hounds in a week, than is heard with those you have seen in a season; the master half hunts them himself, a system quite calculated to confuse and spoil any pack. If a master knows his hounds well enough, and they know him, and he likes to occasionally hunt them himself in a choice country, if master and man hunt them in the same way, no great harm may arise; or if, in the temporary absence of the huntsman, the master takes his place till he comes up, well and good; but one huntsman a day is quite enough, and, with all submission I say it, with these hounds sometimes too much, for I feel quite sure they would often do better if left more alone. They kill a vast number of foxes during the season, or at all events mob them to death; for a greater number of noses on the kennel doors than other packs show, seems the great pride of the hunt. Of course there are a number of gentlemen hunt with them; they have also a rather unusual number of wealthy farmers and their sons, some of the latter sporting pink; they are substantial men, a rough and ready lot of course, and the master and they stand upon very little ceremony; the former raps out, not

merely an oath, but a volley of them if they override his hounds; when he does this, they return it, and tell him to his face 'they are as good as he,' and in half an hour afterwards are as good friends as ever. The gentlemen of the hunt are careful not to expose themselves to this. They are field acquaintances with him, leave their cards at his really princely mansion two or three times in the year, accept his invitation to a fox-hunting dinner during the season, and give him the same in return, at both of which he is about as noisy and a far greater nuisance than when with his hounds. In this truly gentlemanly and enviable way he spends his very large fortune, a tolerably illustrative specimen of the justness of representing Fortune as blind."

The next morning we were at the fixture, the Master had not arrived. The Huntsman here, instead of keeping by himself and his hounds round him, as was the case with the other pack, was surrounded by several young farmers with whom he was indulging in hilarity anything but respectful to the general field; his Whips were between him and the cover, watchful that no hounds broke away, and every now and then a rate indicated that some of them showed symptoms of such intention. After keeping the field waiting a considerable time, the Master came up, and, without the slightest expression of apology or

noticing his field, 'Put 'em in, Jack," showed by the command he was a M.F.H., though his bearing might have led to doubts of such being his position. The Whips went to the right and left, and, on the Huntsman moving his horse, in rushed the pack. They had not been in the cover five minutes before a hound, not merely "threw a tongue," but opened in right earnest. Oh that detestable half rate from the Huntsman, "Soft lay; have a care, Jezebel," I hate it "as reek o' the rotten fens." The First Whip was in cover, with the Huntsman close to him. "Yow, yow, yow, yow," cries a young hound in that kind of cur-like note I hate to hear in a fox-hound; and, worse than all, "Ware hare, Doubtful, eh!" cries the Whip, his thong sounding in echoes far and wide; and, directly afterwards, "camamile, camamile," as a beginning, and "pen an ink, pen an ink," as an ending, showed the thong well laid in had reached the scut-hunting culprit. Shortly, "Tally ho!" sounded from the top of the cover. "Hark forward, hark!" cries (most improperly) the Whip, who should never presume to give such halloo till sanctioned by the voice or horn of the Huntsman. "Tally ho!" comes on our ears, shortly afterwards, nearer to us. "Tally ho, away!" cries another voice to the left.

"What are we to do?" said my friend.

"Upon my word," said I, "I am just in the dilemma Peter Pindar represents Whitbread on George the Third asking him half-a-dozen questions at a time, namely, not exactly knowing what to attend to first. We'll wait till we can get something authentic to act upon."

"Twhoo, twhoo, twhoo," goes the Master's horn. "Come along," said I, hearing this, "we're in luck; he has gone away towards our country." Illfated prophet that I was. "Tally ho, back!" cries the Master.

Crash through the cover comes the Huntsman with the body of the hounds, two or three couple feathering outside. "Here, here, boick! whoo, whoo, whoo!" cries he, capping his hounds into a ride in the middle of the cover. Presently such a crash met our ears. "A view," said I. In a second all was silent. "He has made a short dodge," said I. All was now still for several minutes, rather an unusual circumstance in such a hunt. A most scientific, not-to-be-misunderstood "Tailly ho, away!" roused us. "Gone, for a hundred," said I and the hunted fox too — the prayers of the wicked are oftener heard than those of the deserving. "Let him keep straight, we have a fine country to cross, and towards home too" — a comfortable circumstance this, even to a fox-hunter. We had

scarcely joined the sportsman who had given the halloo before the hounds came up, and passed us like shadows.

"Come along," said this excellent sportsman, who only joined these hounds when he could not get four days a week with the hunt he belonged to, — "Come along, we shall just do the trick."

"'Now,' quoted I —

——— 'Contract,' says Dick;
'These d——d Quornites shall now see the trick.'"

Slipping off, as we had by good luck done, and the hounds going like demons let loose, it was no wonder we were not caught by the field, for this pack, riotous as it was, consisted of as fine chace hounds as any in the kingdom; the fault was in their management. In a general sense of the term all hounds are good enough if the men who hunt them are good enough also. Charley had been so halloo'd, headed, and badgered in covert, that he was half frightened to death before he really could break; but he gave us twenty minutes of as fast a thing as I ever saw. They ran into him in a large field.

"We'll give them a cheer," said our pilot, "and than I shall be off, before we hear observations that you know," said he, looking towards me, "may not be pleasant; for I dare say S—— will not be in the most amiable of tempers."

Our pilot gave a rattling whoo-hoop, and the Huntsman coming up, we took the hint given us and rode off together.

We had not proceeded a field's length before "How do ye do" caused me to turn round, and who should trot up but our old friend, to whom my readers of "Practical Horsemanship" have been introduced, Mr. Jessamy. Jessy sported a new pink, life-guard boots, a cap, and in his hand the "whopper" of a hunting whip he formerly mentioned.

"Permit me," said I to my friends, "to introduce to you a new star in our sporting hemisphere, Mr. Jessamy." Jessy doffed his cap, my friends moved their hats; the one used his handkerchief, the other stooped down and pretended to lay hold of his curb chain; I preserved my gravity without doing either. "I did not see you at cover side," said I, "or afterwards."

"Why," said Jessy, "I got into the middle of that confounded cover, and could not get out till the hounds had got over five or six fields, and all the sportsmen were a long way before me."

"But why did you get into so large a cover as a stranger?"

"Oh!" said Jessy, "a good sportsman always keeps near his hounds."

"Did you?" said I.

"I could not," said Jessy, innocently, "when

they went off without me; but afterwards didn't I 'shove' the grey along," said Jessy, working his arms and legs to show how "shoving" should be accomplished.

"I dare say you did." said I, "and, it seems, shoved all the field before you."

"I kept my place," said Jessy, "like a good un: with all their trying they couldn't get away from me except twice, when my horse fell at two 'raspers,' and here's proof," said he, showing the mud on one of his knees and his horse's nose. "I got up when they killed the fox, before they left the place, I can tell you."

"Bravely done," said I; "but how came so keen a sportsman as you not to stay for the second fox?"

"I thought they were all going home," said Jessy; "but, besides that, the owner of the dogs was very rude to me, so I should not have stayed at any rate."

My friends winked at each other. "How did that happen, Jessamy," inquired I.

"Why," said Jessy, "I came up such 'a buster' to them, that, not seeing the hounds, I rode bang amongst them. 'Ware hounds, where the d—— are you coming?' most insolently said the Huntsman. Three or four of the dogs set up a howling. Up comes their Master. 'Who are

you?' cries he; 'you've nearly killed two couples of hounds.'—'How could I help it,' said I; 'why didn't they get out of the way? I could not stop my horse in a minute, could I?' 'If you can't ride, what business have you with hounds? I wish you'd broke your neck,' said the same man. —'You're no gentleman,' said I; 'I can see that.' 'I can see you're a fool,' said he, turning away; but I did not let him off so easy, but rode up to him. 'I'll never hunt with you again,' said I, 'depend on that; I'll go with another pack. I tell you that.' I thought he looked a little mortified, but I suppose he wasn't."

"Why," said I, "what did he say?"

"Said, a blackguard; why, he said I might go to h—— if I liked."

We could not help all three laughing immoderately at Jessamy's day's sport and its finale. In this he joined, probably conceiving the Master had come off second best in their verbal encounter.

"The grey looks drawn a little fine," said I, "for so early in the season."

"Oh!" said Jessy, "he's in regular training, I can tell you. I have another in as fine condition as him. I have taken lodgings for the winter at Croydon, to be near the Downs. I gallop them twice every day, and didn't I give grey a sweater yesterday."

"I should think he often got one," said I.

"So he does," said Jessy.

"But," replied I, "this is a long way from Croydon. How came you to fix on these hounds?"

"Oh!" said Jessy, "I heard they were such 'clippers to go.' I came up to London by the rail, and then took the other to ——. I am now going back there."

"Going to ——," said I; "why, you're going straight away from it."

"Am I?" said he. "Which is the way?"

"As straight back as you can go," said I; "it is about nine miles from where we are." We all stopped to shake hands.

"Do you know," said Jessy, "I think I shall patronise the Queen's. I hear one does not get so much cover work with them. I like going along."

"If you do that," said I, "tell Davis from me, I know you; and if his hounds don't go along, you'll ride over them. He'll know what I mean."

"Thank you, I will," said Jessy, looking quite knowing at the supposed compliment, and away he galloped back.

Shortly after, my friend told me he must take his leave on the next day.

"I am sorry for it," said I, "as, independent of other reasons, I am proud of my pupil, for such

you have been pleased to call yourself. All I hope is, that when abler tutors and brighter examples shall teach you to far eclipse my poor doings, you will again visit him who gave you the first glimpse of THE FIELD."

THE END.

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